28 October 1977 25p USA & Canada $1 By Air

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South Africa *vs* the World

It is important to understand why the apartheid regime of South Africa is in a class by itself as an intolerable affront to political decency. Not because freedom is denied to opponents; even after last week's bans and arrests, which give effect to an intolerance repugnant to all democrats, there are still elections and opposition parties, critical newspapers and significant remnants of the rule of law, and these are wholly absent in at least 50 other nations. Not because Vorster's ruthlessness is unique; even after the shootings in Soweto, and elsewhere, his criminal record is eclipsed in Uganda and Cambodia. But it is in South Africa, and only in South Africa, that human beings by the million are condemned because of their race to an inferior status which governs their education, the kind of work they may do, their wages and standard of living, the places where they may live, their entire social and civic life. Only South Africa has a political system which, by its essential nature, can never gain the assent of the majority of the population. Therefore, Vorster's moral title to rule can never be conceded by anyone who subscribes to the political traditions accepted elsewhere – those of Jefferson or those of Marx.

So it is right and inevitable that he should have no friends, except on the embarrassing fringe of the Tory Party, in the National Front, and among similar groups in pluralist societies. So far as governments are concerned, the voting in the United Nations will express a consensus drawn from President Carter's administration, Europe, the Communist countries and the Third World. All of them heartily wish that he would vanish from the scene. But since he has served dramatic and brutal notice that he has no intention of doing so – since the last hopes of a gradual 'withering away' of apartheid have been made untenable – the question of what is to be done must be faced.

Vorster is weaker than he was even five years ago, and there is evidence of minds being wonderfully concentrated among the white population; but he is still strong. These whites, numbering four million, are a more formidable proposition than the handfuls in the former Portuguese colonies or in Rhodesia, and the Afrikaners at least are pretty solidly determined to defend their privileges. South Africa is not an outpost of white supremacy to be sacrificed in case of need, like Rhodesia and Namibia, but its heartland. It is also a considerable industrial power, rich in all resources except its Achilles heel – oil. Large-scale overseas investment has been attracted by a buoyant market and low wages. Thus, the South African system has close links with world capitalism and especially with the great multinational corporations. When we remember what powerful lobbies these corporations can muster in London, Washington and elsewhere, we must reckon that this is Vorster's most valuable card.

It will be right to keep up the most forceful political disapproval of apartheid. It will be right to support the resistance of the black population, whatever form it may take, including armed struggle. But a war of liberation would be long and ghastly. To cheer on such sacrifices from a position of safety is not very laudable; to forestall the necessity is a far better course. It is therefore above all right to weaken the South African regime by depriving it of trade, investment and all economic support.

We should be dishonest if we pretended that this policy can be implemented overnight. The cost would be serious, and would be paid not only by shareholders but by British and other workers who would lose their jobs. To accept that blithely, while simultaneously reproaching Mr Healey for tolerating unemployment, is to incur a reasonable charge of inconsistency. What is both feasible and necessary is to work out a planned reduction of trade to South Africa, co-ordinated with a general reflation of the economy and with a systematic switch of the export effort – notably to black Africa, which is already a bigger market for British goods than South Africa. The nations which vote for measures to oppose apartheid must mean what they say – and Britain under a Labour Government must not be the laggard.

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Spotlight on Politics

James Fenton

Learning to Live with the Blob

Political life is currently passing through a highly paradoxical phase. It is most unusual for a period of scandal to coincide with a phase of economic recovery. Normally people start slinging mud at a time of depression. Scandal is a symptom. Seen from a Tory point of view, the present turmoil among the Liberals must provide a rather welcome diversion from all the good news. Suppose Peter Hain is right. Suppose heads are going to roll, reputations to come crashing to the ground, and suppose the Government finds all this very embarrassing. (A word in the ear of Peter Hain, by the way: surely you can't have it both ways, old fruit – either you left the Liberal Party for reasons of political principle, as you told me, or you left it for the merely contingent reason of the Scandal, as you told Chapman Pincher; if the latter, it was surely rather premature to join the Labour Party; if the former, it was surely rather unwise to hang around with chaps like Pincher. Heaven knows, I'm not one of the Christ-I-can't-stand-Peter-Hain brigade. I was defending you the other day, as a matter of fact, against an incredibly grumpy Eric Heffer, who thought you should have spent ten years knocking on doors before being allowed on to the Tribune platform at Brighton. But what am I to say to Heffer next time I meet him? Eh?). The Tories, who have little ideological quarrel with the Liberals, have very good reasons for detesting the pact. *Ergo*, they have every incentive to take a little quiet pleasure in the latest turn of events, although they would never say so, natch. (This must be the first time in the history of English prose that we find a sentence beginning with '*ergo*' and ending in 'natch'.)

What about the Labour point of view? Must it not be distressing for Callaghan, as day after day the 'revelations' tumble out, as a series of curious villains, hired, one supposes, from Rentaruffian, tell of money they were offered to 'harm', silence or put a stop to each other? Might not some of this rubbing-out rub off on the Pact, and therefore 'harm' Labour? My own view is not. It is true that Labour has traditionally wanted a strong Liberal Party pulling Tory votes, but most Labour politicians have kissed goodbye to the idea of a strong Liberal Party some time ago. However damaging the present scandal proves for the Liberals (and it might not be all that damaging – they might, for instance, pull in the criminal vote), it is only a small part of the larger problem which faces Steel: the problem of selling the pact as a permanent arrangement. Labour has no interest in this matter. What Labour wants to do is sell Labour. In this connection, the continuous reappearance of Sir Harold Wilson, and the further revelations of the wild workings of his imagination, is of much closer concern to Callaghan than the problems of Thorpe.

In the meantime, however, the good news continues to roll in. Good news, for instance, for the landladies of Culham and surrounding villages. Now is the time to splash out on cavity wall insulation, that new bathroom you promised yourself so many years ago, and, who knows, perhaps even a neat little subterranean fall-out shelter. For Tony Benn, it has been the Day of the Doughnut, the announcement of the news that the Joint European Torus is to be built in the wilds of Oxfordshire. There is something very English about this idea – the idea that the best way to bridge the energy gap is by means of gigantic ring doughnuts, sizzling with hot, electrified, gaseous jam. Congratulations, Dr 'Bas' Pease.

I pass over the good news of the resignation of Sir Richard Dobson, and come to that of the fall in unemployment. If the analysts are uncertain whether this indicates a real change in employment trends, or merely a greater volatility in the figures, it nevertheless provided Denis Healey with another cheering bit of news on the day of his millionth budget. You can't deny it – that man has had a winning streak. There was a time when the arrival of Healey upon any scene was greeted with shouts of horror and dismay: the Blob from outer space had arrived and was terrorising the planet. Today the Blob has taken on a somewhat more friendly appearance. Or is it simply that we have learnt to live with his blobbishness?

At all events, the grounds for the Blob's latest Budget had been laid well in advance, from the time of the TUC conference, from the broad hints, nudges and winks which Callaghan gave in Brighton, and from the way the Blob has seeped his intentions to the press. There was to be something for everyone. Something for the monetarists worried at the inflow of foreign money into the reserves. Something for Eric Heffer and the construction industry (although the exact sum was not finally known) in order to provide extra jobs. Something for the pensioners at Christmas. Something for the low-paid. Something for the average man. Something (rather a lot) for the anti-public expenditure lobby. And, in line with the conditional nature of the Blob's previous masterpieces, a promise of more where that came from in the Spring – but only if you behave.

As an act of blatant and unprincipled blobbery, it was quite a respectable effort. It is remarkable with what ease the Government has, so far, managed to move away from the Social Contract and into the dangerous wage-hunting season. It is true that, from the way they have managed it, the police wage claim has come to represent the biggest immediate hazard of the political year. The press is all in favour of the police claim. The public is all in favour of the police claim. The Tories, of course, have a free hand, as far as making promises is concerned. But the Government finds itself in a difficult corner. My advice to them would be to give in to the police as a special case; if they intend to stick to their word and keep the public sector wages down, a gratified and contented police force will come in extremely handy.

Parliament met this week in a hear-hearish mood. Margaret Thatcher was wearing green. Phillip Whitehead has had his hair cut. Lord Kaldor-and-Balogh, from the Goulash Archipelago, was in the balcony. The Chamber was looking very trim. The Blob delivered his speech to an appreciative Labour back bench, and sat down to allow Sir Geoffrey Howe to make his usual desparate attempt to hold the attention of either side of the House. There had been no great surprises in the speech although it was interesting that the higher level of support for the construction industry, which had been urged by Peter Shore in the cabinet, had been accepted. Sir Geoffrey called the whole thing a Budget of repentance. John Pardoe, who had been pleased to note that the keen Liberal interest in small businesses had been accommodated, through the efforts of Harold Lever, said that the Chancellor was 'halfway to sanity'. This phrase, coming from Pardoe, provoked a considerable amount of mirth. Why? I wonder. Further along the bench from Pardoe sat Jeremy Thorpe, who had only a short while before been too exhausted to meet the Press, or to issue his statement about the new allegations in the Scott affair.

The Blob himself was in, I should say, corking form. His economic predictions were intended to cover the next 18 months – a figure which when read out provoked another burst of mirth. Certainly this Christmas will be very much the Blob's affair, with its pensioners' handout and its December rebates. It was, I suppose, the *Christmas Carol* Budget, in which the Treasury Scrooges were prevailed upon at last to see a little error in their ways, and to buy us all a nice big turkey and a round of drinks. A Merry Christmas then (may I be the first to say it?) to all our readers. And God bless us all, wherever we may be.

NEW STATESMAN

Vol 94 No 2432

Published weekly at Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ Tel: 01-405 8471

© 1977
The Statesman & Nation Publishing Co Ltd

Annual Subscription Rates

By surface mail	UK £12.50 Overseas £14 USA $30
By air mail	Europe £17.50 Middle East £19 Africa, India £20 USA, Canada $40 Australia, NZ, Far East £21

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Tom Stoppard

Looking - Glass World

Last week's trial in Prague got Czechoslovakia a bad press all over the political spectrum, but it was *The Times* which threw the deftest barb in pointing out the irony of one of the charges: 'damaging the name of the state abroad'. Franz Kafka, meet Lewis Carroll.

There were signs of nervous insecurity on the Czechoslovak side. Vaclav Havel, a playwright who has brought the CSSR more cachet abroad than all the Bohemian glassblowers put together, and who got 14 months, suspended, on the above charge, having spent four and a half months in prison on the way, told friends afterwards that the whole trial looked funny to him. It wasn't like the trials he remembered. There was no proper confrontation. It was 'not good theatre'. There were different monologues going on. The court was hardly interested in whether the four defendants were pleading guilty or not guilty, and the main prosecution witness was barely utilised; the court said it had the statements it needed. It was a rush job.

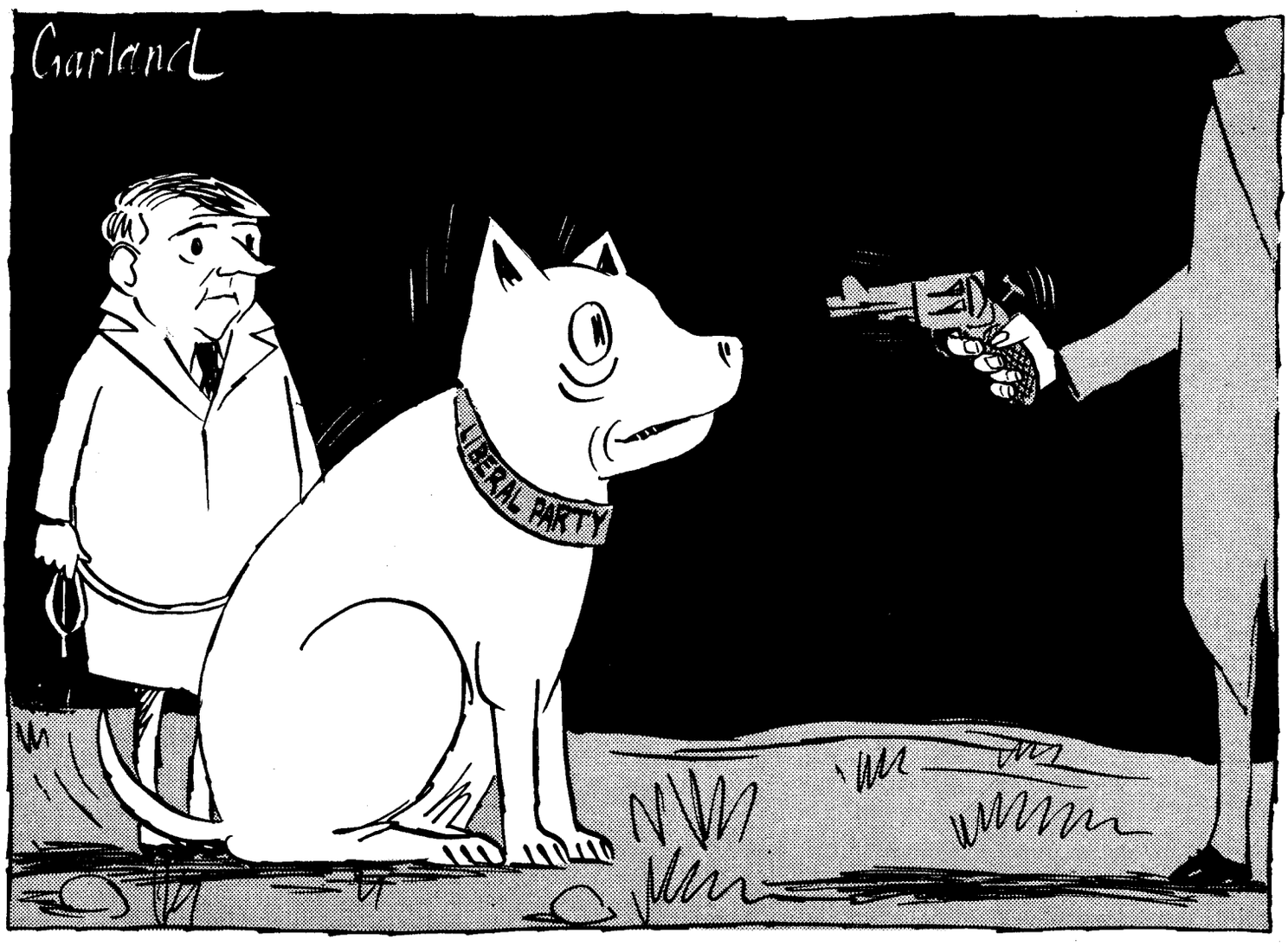
There were odd changes of mood. On Monday, the first day, it seemed that the sentences would be harsh. Then overnight the prosecutor lowered the stakes. The trial was wrapped up by lunchtime and it was announced that sentences would be given the following day. But the next thing that happened was that Havel and Frantisek Pavlicek, the two accused who were not in custody, were told to come back at 2 p.m.

There was something hapless about the way the puppets kept showing their strings. Even when the whole thing was over, with Ota Ornest and Jiri Lederer sent down for three and a half years and three years respectively, the prisoners' exit was bungled. When the van carrying them emerged from the main entrance it had to stop for a red light at the corner, and suddenly there was a crowd of well-wishers milling around and shouting greetings to Ornest and Lederer. Those who had been following the case from outside the closed courtroom (at times there had been over a hundred people haunting the steps and corridors) were joined by passers-by who didn't know who was in the van but chimed in out of natural sympathy.

I hope it cheered Lederer up a little, because he must have been feeling particularly bitter. Arrested in January in the immediate aftermath of Charter 77, he had had ten months to prepare a statement and he had obviously gone to some trouble. In court he started to explain that he had always tried to work for true socialism as he saw it, and that he had always cared about being a good journalist. The court didn't want to know. After the third interruption Lederer gave up and sat down. The only consolation is that his sentence could have been worse considering that he had been on probation when arrested, having been released from gaol in December 1972. On that occasion his crime had been to write a critical article about Gomulka's Poland.

Lederer will be 58 when he gets out this time, and it is anyone's guess whether Czechoslovakia will have moved any nearer towards his kind of socialism, whether men will still be put away for passing literary manuscripts to the West. The timing of the trial, during the Belgrade conference, suggests a tough line (rather like Vorster telling the world to mind its own business), but the unconfident way in which it was carried out permits a more optimistic view. Certainly Lederer's many friends are sure that the authorities were intimidated by all the publicity, and perhaps Husak reckoned that the longer it was left the harder it would be.

Havel's friend and fellow playwright Pavel Kohout said afterwards that the



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essential problem was not with courtroom justice but with legislation, which is in a contradictory state. The court, in other words, did not have to do back-somersaults to make unstickable charges stick. Ornest had come clean. An elderly man in poor health, he broke down very quickly when arrested, and insofar as passing manuscripts to foreigners is a crime, such a crime was conventionally proved. But the defence was squarely based on Czechoslovak law. The very starting point of Charter 77 is Law No. 120 in the Czechoslovak Register of Laws. This enshrines the terms of two covenants signed by the Czechs in New York in 1968, 'confirmed' at Helsinki, and 'ratified' by the Federal Assembly in November 1975. The texts of the two covenants were published in the Register of Laws a year ago this month, and the legal position is quite clear. It is the right of the citizen and the duty of the state to enjoy and uphold all those freedoms spelled out in New York in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

How little this means to Husak's government was made clear on both sides of the courtroom door. On the first day about a dozen people, including Kohout, were taken into custody on the premises. Others were picked up at home to prevent them from showing up at all.

One of these was Pavel Landovsky, an actor. It was he who was driving the car on the fateful morning of 6 January when the first copies of Charter 77 were being delivered to the Government, the press and other interested parties. Like hundreds of other signatories of the Charter, Landovsky is not allowed to work at his profession. One night in June he took me to 'his' theatre and it was like accompanying a hungry child to the window of a cake-shop.

If you saw *Closely Observed Trains* you saw Landovsky, just. He was the fellow killing a goose. He happened to be passing so the director, a friend of his, put him in the film, and thus Landovsky, a successful and rather well-known actor in Czechoslovakia, accidentally got his only role in an internationally acclaimed picture. He is a gregarious man quite unimpressed by shabby authority, and it is easy to imagine the scene when the police knocked on his door on Monday morning. It seems that Landovsky would not come quietly. Rumour has it that one policeman was thrown down the stairs. But in the end they took him. I hope he doesn't become famous before he becomes re-employed.

Roger Omond

Blackout in South Africa

Smile: have a good day, the posters and stickers around East London are saying. It's part of a seven-day courtesy campaign sponsored by the whites-only Rotary organisation, but they forgot to tell the South African Police Minister, J. T. Kruger, about it. With all the abrupt authoritarianism the cabinet could muster, 18 organisations, two newspapers, one editor and six other individuals were banned and about 50 black leaders detained without trial. After that a few stickers attracted instant graffitti: 'Smile', they said, and then below: 'Kruger says so.'

Kruger said a few other things as well. Statements he made to the press and on state-controlled television are now the subject of a £66,000 defamation summons shortly to be served on him by one of the people he banned, *Daily Dispatch* editor Donald Woods. It's the second one Woods has issued against Kruger, who must be cursing the day on which Woods became a nationally and internationally known figure. The ban may have silenced Woods temporarily, but Kruger will be spending a few days sweating in court.

Courts do not attract Kruger. He prefers to do things by proclamation, where his evidence can't be tested. So his crackdown bypassed any legal process and his servants in the Department of Justice followed his lead. In East London half a dozen liberal whites organised a protest meeting last Thursday. An hour before it was due to start the chief magistrate banned it. Why? It could lead to unrest, he said. Who had objected? He wasn't saying.

More than 500 people turned up to attend the meeting, due to be addressed by eight community leaders and academics. They milled around outside the pinky-brown City Hall – it's in the process of being painted a safer colour – watching police in camouflage uniforms with Alsatian dogs watching them. It was tense and confused – and then three dozen Nationalist vigilantes turned up looking for trouble. Two young white girls nearly gave them the opportunity they wanted. The girls were holding placards comparing Vorster and Kruger to Hitler – comparisons not made lightly by even the most militant opponents of the Government. The girls had been persuaded to turn the placards to the City Hall wall, but the Nationalist bovver-boys wanted to see the placards, get the opportunity to put the boot in and, presumably, plead justifiable assault.

At this stage it was a white versus white confrontation. But then a couple of dozen young blacks crossed the road to help protect the girls. Ironically the vigilantes and the blacks started talking to one another – exactly what apartheid is designed to stop. But one angry word could have set off the unrest so feared by the chief magistrate, the potential for which would not have existed inside the Victorian Gothic City Hall. A few yards away the police waited for orders. The dogs were brought closer. The police chief spoke through a portable megaphone (which did not work) ordering the crowd to disperse within five, and then three minutes. The police looked both ridiculous and intimidating, but the clear impression they or their superiors want to make is that this is no war. The police chief, one Colonel Odendaal, had more sense than Kruger: rather than send in his men, which would have set off a riot in the middle of the main shopping centre, he began to walk quietly among the crowd, asking people individually to allow other pedestrians to pass. And gradually the crowd did.

East London that day was a microcosm of South Africa. There was anger on all sides: from liberal whites, and those blacks still outside prison cells, that the Government had given a deliberate two-finger sign to racial reconciliation inside the country, and against the West generally: there was anger among hard-line Nationalists that people were still daring to criticise the Government. And just over one's shoulder were the police and the Special Branch ready to move in.

It is likely that the Special Branch will move again. Kruger said in an American TV interview at the week's end that he foresaw more trouble: having banned the Black Consciousness Movement, detained its top visible leaders, closed down two newspapers and banned seven leading Radic-Libs (in Spiro Agnew's phrase), the next to get the chop will be the second echelon if there is more unrest – as appears certain. Whether or not this echelon is responsible for trouble or not is unimportant. What is important is that the Government, facing an election on 30 November, wants to be perceived as being tough. It wants to reassure the Bantustan leaders that their positions are secure. And these things have a built-in momentum, despite the massive internal and international repugnance at Kruger's crackdown.

There are few opponents of the Government whom the Government, in its fear, recognises as moderate. Even the conservative Dr Jan Marais, now standing as a Nationalist parliamentary candidate, and who used to head the trendy Trust Bank, has been told by Vorster's hopeful heir-apparent Connie Mulder to 'shut up or else' because he dared to criticise some apartheid legislation. The individuals, organisations and newspapers affected by last week's *blitzkrieg* were perhaps the last to offer any hope of racial reconciliation, but the Government appears to have decided on confrontation. The election is being fought on a back-to-the-laager platform with people outside the party framework portrayed as traitors and agitators.

While Vorster and Kruger warn darkly of the sacrifices white South Africa will have to make to remain white, more are having second thoughts about sticking around to see the confrontation the Government appears to be encouraging. The number of actual and potential emigrants has risen sharply since Soweto last year and last week's bannings and detentions will result in a new flood of whites looking for refuge in Britain, Australia, the United States and Canada. Many of these families have teenage sons shortly due for their two-year military call-up. The girl- and sport-loving son of a colleague asked his father last week: 'Dad, if I don't want to go to

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the army will I have to go to jail?' 'Yes,' his father replied. 'Well then I'll have to go to jail,' this not untypical boy said.

Avoiding the call-up and border duty is a constant theme of young white conversation – though because encouraging avoidance, or counselling passive resistance, is a crime, the conversations tend to be in private and in low voices. It is not yet approaching anything like the scale of the Vietnam draft-dodgers in the US – partly because the South African authorities under Defence Minister P. W. Botha regard any what-are-we-fighting-for talk as akin to treason. Still, many teenagers and university students are studying their options closely, and their parents are looking at the employment opportunities for doctors, accountants and lawyers overseas with more than idle interest.

Somehow the cabinet has locked itself into a situation where it feels it has no choice but to ban organisations and detain or ban individuals who are against apartheid and to tell the West, in Vorster's words, 'Do your damnedest'. But why? Just as Kruger was arranging his crackdown, the South African-appointed Administrator-General in Namibia was abolishing the pass laws and repealing the legislation forbidding sex and marriage across the colour line.

Before he was banned, Donald Woods and thousands like him who are still at large today were asking why, if liberalism is to be encouraged in Namibia and majority rule forced on Rhodesia, South Africa could not take a few hesitant steps in the same direction. Liberal Nationalists (if that is not a contradiction in terms) have been saying privately that as soon as Vorster has pushed through his constitutional changes he will make the sort of *turnhalle*-type moves wanted and crack down ruthlessly on dissent from the Right. But that all looks like wishful thinking now and even if he does, it will once again be a case of too little, too late.

So today South Africa waits: for the next spate of detentions, for more unrest, for the West to decide what its damndedest will be. We're not quite numb with shock at the lengths the Government will go to, but there is a feeling of desolation, that the hopes for peaceful, or relatively peaceful, change have evaporated. It began with the death of Steve Biko in a Pretoria prison cell in September. Last week's events re-emphasised it. Just as no South African Department of Information propaganda claim will convince anybody, anywhere, that this Government is not heading towards confrontation, no amount of courtesy campaigning now will put a smile back onto the face of South Africa.

East London

Phillip Whitehead

A Tale of Scottish TV

This week the correspondence pages of the *Scotsman* have been humming with the animation usually reserved for tactless English criticisms of Scotland's football or flag. The target of the denunciations was Dr Tom Carbery, doyen of the Independent Broadcasting Authority, and for the last seven years its statutory Scot. He had brushed aside criticisms of IBA lethargy in scrutinising the output of Scottish Television, the station that was once said to be a licence to print money by Lord Thomson, but has gone through hard times since the master coiner pulled out. Specifically, he was being asked where was that 'close attention' which the Annan Committee had exhorted the IBA to pay to Scottish TV in the light of its decision to pay off its documentary unit created the year before.

Such shifts of face and fortune occur often enough in ITV. Sometimes they mean no more than a gain or loss of Brownie points for the personalities concerned. But the STV venture into documentaries was different. It was part of the company's rehabilitation, after lean times. STV certainly needed to make documentaries. It has undergone some awkward periods of scrutiny in the last ten years. Of the last franchise re-allocation Lord Hill wrote: 'We knew a good deal about the performance of this company mainly because of our anxieties about it. The company tended to think it was much better than its programmes indicated it was.'

On that occasion Hill was overruled by his colleagues. He wanted STV replaced. They kept it on, partly perhaps because for all his cynicism with his Scottish franchise, Thomson was the man who had saved *The Times*. But when the Annan Committee came to assess STV eight years later it would have been hard to dissent from Hill's description. We were not impressed, and said so. The company seemed lacklustre, nervous of failure, when it served one of the most effervescent parts of the United Kingdom. We thought that 80 per cent of the people of Scotland deserved as good a service as the larger regions of England.

Bill Brown, the amiable STV Managing Director, who wears the perpetually apprehensive look of a bear completely surrounded by water, told the Scottish press that the report was already out of date. The good times were coming. As an encouragement STV had hired an experienced producer, Christine Fox, in August 1976 to start a documentary unit from scratch. The hope was that she would make 8-12 films in a year. Her contract was to be renewed if all went well after six months. Setting up such a unit is always a nightmare. It must be particularly so when the newcomer finds herself struggling against existing interests for stretched resources, of editing and dubbing as well as shooting film. Seed money has to be put down. You cannot make a documentary department overnight.

There were internecine fights between the NUJ and the ACTT about who should staff the unit. Some of the programmes got up the nostrils of powerful interests in Scotland. There were bad ones as well as good, although Bill Brown himself admits that 'We can't say she didn't deliver what we expected.' What she delivered was some ten films within the year, two of which were accepted for networking – and one of these had to be remade at the last minute request of the network for a different kind of film about the Edinburgh Festival. The wonder is not that the ten films won a fair measure of critical acclaim in Scotland, but that they got made at all in that first year, and at a total cost of £86,000 which hardly makes it the most extravagent of TV series.

In June, two months after the Annan furore had died down, Christine Fox was called in to see the Controller of Programmes. There had been 'a change of heart', he told her. The documentary department was putting a strain on resources. There would be more extended news features, of the kind which in the company are apparently known as 'hit and runs', but which Bill Brown portrayed to me as '*This Week*'-style operations. Fox's contract ran its course. Her researchers, carefully found and hired, had not even arrived when she was told that the game was up. They stayed their minimum contractual span and left too. So was it all a 'Pilkington', or was Brown overruled by his board when they saw the mounting cost of STV's other prestige venture *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, now coming in at £32,000 per episode?

Bill Brown is adamant that there will still be documentaries, in addition to the 'hit and runs'. Whether they will put Scotland on the map as his documentary department could have done remains to be seen. Dr Carbery of the IBA, meanwhile, sees no evil and hears no evil, though he has lashed out at his critics in the *Scotsman*, claiming that 'we are not aware that STV have disbanded their documentary unit . . .' No. They have sent it packing but they have not disbanded it. What worries the 'self-appointed experts on broadcasting' who so annoy Dr Carbery, is that if there is not the slightest sign of official disquiet in what he calls his 'ongoing appraisals of company performance as a matter of routine' then STV will lapse once more. That would be something of a tragedy for Scottish broadcasting.

Writing recently of the other duties of the IBA in Scotland, Dr Carbery remarked chattily: 'When my English colleagues moan – no, that's unfair – raise eyebrows, I remind them of St Augustine (or was it St Thomas Aquinas?) who observed "There is no such question as why do I do my duty".' While the ambitious and the artful gather to compete for Scotland's premier franchise in 1979 Dr Carbery must muse on his duty. Too much criticism from south of the border may be counter-productive; the IBA has to rely on its Scottish office however cosy their relationship with STV. He must be given the nod, without the opportunity of adding that qualification which St Augustine (or was it St Thomas Aquinas?) added to another moral plea – do not give it yet!

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Donald Gould

The Springs of Suffering

Do we need a National Health Service? Or could we, perhaps, do almost as well without the doctors and the hospitals and all the miraculous medicinal compounds which are currently costing the nation £6,500m. every year and an almighty amount of bother to boot?

Fifteen years ago I spent a highly profitable three months in Saskatchewan as a blackleg. The provincial Government had decided to organise a fairly mild form of state medicine whereby citizens paid a compulsory subscription to an insurance scheme and then had the greater part of their medical bills reimbursed. The new legislation was fiercely opposed by the doctors.

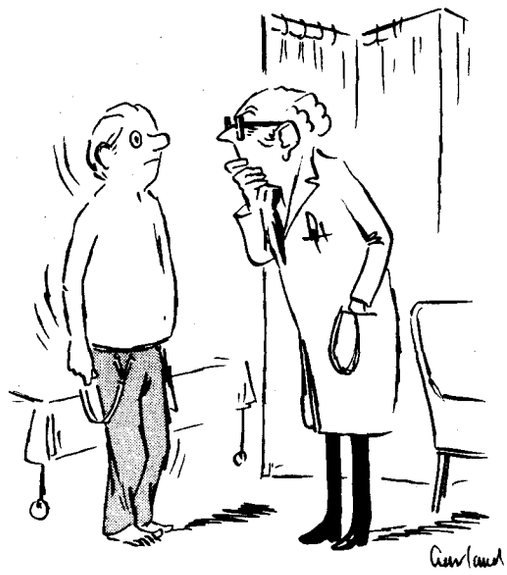
To the innocent, the violence of the opposition was difficult to understand. The doctors were still going to be paid for their work on a fee-for-service basis (so much for an injection, so much for an appendectomy, so much for a check-up) just as before. The only difference proposed was that they should henceforward garner most of their harvest in the form of cheques from a Government office in Regina, and not dollar bills passed across the receptionist's desk.

The overt objection of the profession to the new arrangement was that it represented an intolerable state intervention in the sacred doctor/patient relationship. Their real fear of the scheme lay in the fact that it would give authority precise information about doctors' incomes, and about the costly and frequently unnecessary 'services' which physicians and surgeons were foisting upon a medically ignorant public. Up until then the doctors had been getting away with murder (and in a literal as well as a figurative sense, in that some of their patients died as a result of useless surgery done for profit).

It was for this that Saskatchewan doctors went on strike. The provincial Government advertised for doctors who might be willing to act as strike-breakers. The pay offered was high and that's why I went, for that and the adventure. I was sent out, together with a youthful colleague, to a hospital in a tiny prairie town consisting of a gas station, and a general store, and a cold store (where the ladies kept their fur coats for the summer), and a drug store, and a handful of offices, and a hick hotel, and a school, and half-a-dozen grain elevators by the railroad tracks, and two or three hundred houses, and eight or nine hundred people, and nothing else at all.

There had been five doctors practising in the town and running the 40-bed modern hospital. Of course, all the high technology and abundance of medical expertise available wasn't supported by the tiny township within which it lay. The village acted as the medical centre for the many farmsteads and even tinier hamlets within the surrounding two or three thousand square miles of prairie, and the enthusiasm of the immediate locals for their temple of healing sprang not from any hypochondriacal concern for their own health, but from the fact that the presence of the hospital and the doctors attracted a reliable flow of pilgrims who sustained the trade of the shops and various service-mongers. When the strike was declared all five doctors had gone to ground. Just before the strike the hospital had been full to overflowing with several extra beds put up in corridors. On D-day minus one the doctors had found themselves able to send all the patients home. During the three or four weeks for which we blacklegs staffed the place we never had more than half-a-dozen patients in our beds.

The provincial Government had managed to keep a similar skeleton service going in quite a number of centres by the use of imported strike-breakers, but I heard of



none of my fellow medical scabs who had been overstretched. Many of the more remote prairie communities had had to make do without a doctor altogether. But during the period of the strike no single death occured which was attributable to the unavailability of instant medical care. Indeed, the province's mortality figures actually fell below the average for the time of year.

This fairly brief but large-scale experiment concerning the effects of the reduction and the suspension of medical care did not, of course, even begin to prove that doctors are useless, and that we would be just as well off without them, but it did strongly suggest that we may habitually and grossly overestimate the importance of curative medicine in maintaining health and sustaining life. A similar conclusion must be reached from the results of the much larger and longer experiment which has been in progress here in the UK for the past 28 years. During that time Britons have been privileged to enjoy one of the most comprehensive and readily accessible systems of medical care in the world, served by doctors and nurses and other health workers trained to a pitch of excellence as high as may be found, and there have also been major advances in therapy. However, whilst the past decades *have* seen a dramatic change in the pattern of disease, there has been no reduction in the total incidence of ill health.

In mid-Victorian times a man aged 50 could expect to go on living for another 20 years. Now, well over a century later, a 50-year-old man has on average 23 more years to live, which is not much to show for the explosive development in medical science which has characterised the last third of the era. On the other hand there has been a great improvement in life expectancy *at birth*. A hundred years ago a newborn boy could expect to survive to the age of 41, and a girl (women are biologically the tougher sex) to the age of 45. These low average figures were due to the large number of deaths occurring among children and young adults, and especially to deaths during the first year of life. Only six out of every ten children born survived to adulthood, and the infant mortality rate, which is the number of babies out of every thousand born alive dying before their first birthday, hovered around the 150 mark. That figure is now about 17 deaths per thousand live births, of which the great majority occur within the first week of life. As a result of the greatly reduced death rate among children and young people life expectancy at birth is now something over 68 for males and just under 75 for females.

The greatly improved chance of surviving until middle age has been largely the result of a reduction in the toll exacted by infectious diseases. Since Gladstone became Prime Minister deaths from tuberculosis, typhoid, diptheria, scarlet fever, whooping cough and measles have fallen by 99 per cent. Some of the improvement has been due to such factors as the widespread use of preventive inoculations, mass radiography, effective anti-bacterial drugs, and similar instruments of medical science, but the trend was well under way long before such weapons were available (our infant mortality rate had fallen to around 50 at the outbreak of World War II), and the major force for change has been a better standard of living – better housing, better nutrition and better working conditions.

But the erstwhile mortal diseases have simply been replaced by others which kill people just as dead, and the characteristic of the most important of these latter-day afflictions is their intractable nature, so that the best, modern, curative medicine is now paying disappointingly small dividends in

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Crossman lets the cat out again this Sunday

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terms of health restored and lives saved. This being so we should be asking ourselves whether our present approach to health care is a sensible one. Are we right to put so much effort, skill and money into devising and providing ever more sophisticated and elaborate methods for salvaging and repairing minds and bodies which have become disabled, or should far more attention be paid to discovering and defining the causes of ill health, and then taking steps to prevent it?

Heart complaints now kill about 170,000 people in England each year, and coronary artery disease, which is by far the commonest cause of heart trouble, is responsible for a quarter of all deaths, being ahead of cancer as the biggest slayer of Western man.

Since the scale of this modern epidemic has been recognised a great deal of money has been spent on the provision of intensive care units into which the victims of CHD are wheeled following an attack. But after the first flush of enthusiasm for this fire brigade policy had abated, some people began to wonder how well it was paying off, and made the sobering discovery that there is no difference at all between the survival rate of patients treated in intensive care and those nursed in the far more congenial atmosphere of their own homes. This does not mean that no lives have ever been saved by the instant availability of the special techniques which intensive care provides, but it does mean that the most advanced monitoring and corrective measures have made no impact upon the overall damage done by the disease.

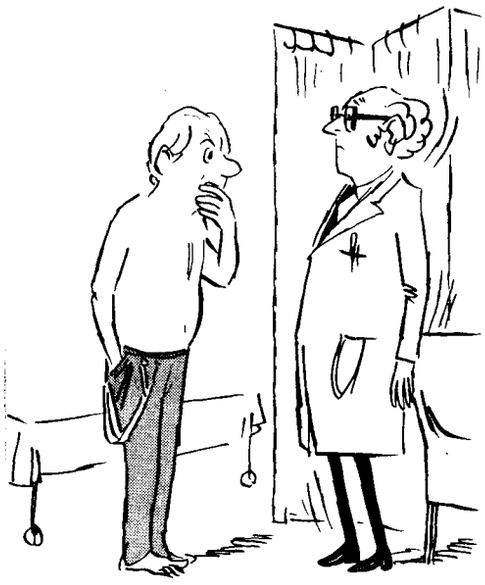
On the other hand we now know a good deal about the so-called risk factors which increase the chances of an individual suffering a coronary attack. These include cigarette smoking, obesity, lack of exercise, high blood-fat levels, high blood pressure, and choosing the wrong parents. We can't do much about our parents, and whether or not everybody should have their blood pressure checked at regular intervals and should be treated with pressure-reducing drugs if they show signs of going above the line is still a matter for argument. We *can* do a good deal about smoking, exercise, and eating habits.

The individual has a high degree of control over such matters, and governments could do much more than at present in the way of encouraging sensible behaviour, and making a healthier life style more attractive. To take one example, the national diet could be improved by supporting the production and consumption of health-promoting foods such as wholemeal and leaner meats – a change of emphasis which could be achieved without encroaching upon anybody's freedom of choice.

Next to heart disease and strokes, cancer is the major killer in the developed world, causing the death of one person in every five, and here again the results of treatment have proved disappointing. A few cancers, including one form of childhood leukaemia, can be cured if tackled soon enough, but, unfortunately, it is the common cancers which have proved least amenable to treatment, and tumours of the lung and the gut and the breast and the genitalia continue to kill more and more people every year. However, as with CHD, many cancers are preventable.

Not long ago Professor Eric Boyland, then head of the Department of Biochemistry at the Chester Beatty Research Institute in London, stated that '. . . most of cancer in human subjects is due to external chemical factors that could be eleminated . . . More effort should be expended in trying to find the causes of the more common forms of cancer . . . The discovery of the causes and their removal seems to be the most hopeful way of solving the human cancer problem.'

This is probably a counsel of perfection, since the factors known or thought to be capable of triggering off the cancerous process in susceptible individuals, let alone the many such factors undoubtedly yet to be discovered, are manifold. The list includes sunshine, sexual intercourse, fried bacon, many chemicals used in or produced by industry, probably viruses, possibly a fibre-deficient diet, alcohol, man-made radiations, asbestos dust, and, of course, smoking. But the fact that it may be possible or even desirable, to take the measures needed to eliminate the causes of cancer altogether is



no sort of excuse for failing to do what could be done without making life an exercise in total self-denial – a kind of continual Lent.

Road accidents cause 6-7,000 deaths each year (equal to about a quarter of the lung cancer deaths due to smoking), and result in 80,000 serious injuries. Some 6,000 children are killed or injured while crossing road. The annual cost of the consequent medical care, damage to property, time lost from work, and other direct sequelae, is an estimated £1,000 million. No one has so far attempted to cost the pain and grief. The figures could be slashed by a policy of moving as much goods traffic as possible back to the railways, by keeping private cars out of city centres, by imposing and enforcing the kind of speed limits we now only tolerate in the face of a fuel shortage, by making the wearing of seat belts compulsory, by making safety a prime objective of road engineering, and by squeezing the drunken driver until the pips squeak. Road deaths and injuries are an eminently preventable disease.

At least half-a-million Britons drink to the extent that their health and behaviour is seriously affected, and many more suffer because of the resultant violence, vandalism, dangerous driving, and sheer inefficiency of the alcohol addict. Admissions to hospital for alcoholism doubled between 1954-74, with 12,000 patients a year being treated in special alcoholism units, and 4,000 occupying other hospital beds. And yet we permit the brewers and distillers to push their poison with as little hindrance as the tobacco barons suffer in flogging cancer sticks.

Serious efforts should be made to discover *why* people smoke and drink (or, if that seems a foolishly naive question, how it is that many are able to lead contented lives without the aid of one or both of these addictive drugs). But since drink and other mood-altering potions have been a solace to mankind from the beginnings of recorded history, it may be that most of us need some kind of chemical crutch, and would be the poorer without it, and if that is the case it would be well worthwhile to seek some equally pleasing but much less toxic substitute.

Perhaps the sharpest indication of the poverty of our present approach to the problem of ill health is the fact that the very agents which we have invented for the relief of suffering are becoming an increasing *cause* of sickness. So-called iatrogenic disease – illness resulting from treatment – is now responsible, or partly so, for about 5 per cent of all hospital admissions, and one authority has claimed that some 30 per cent of patients, once in hospital, suffer some kind of unwanted effect from the drugs they are given. The numbers similarly affected in the community at large must be very much greater still. Over-enthusiastic and injudicious therapy is now no new thing. Louis XIII is said to have suffered 212 enemas, 215 purgations, and 47 bleedings in the course of a single year, and a canon of Troyes was once sued for the cost of 2,190 enemas administered to him over a period of two years. Modern drugs have a far greater potential for harm, and are far more widely available, and are far more recklessly dispensed than the ancient nostrums.

If any doubt remains concerning the proposition that the health of a community is largely a reflection of the life-style and social circumstances of the people who make it up, and is hardly dependent at all upon the standard of the medical services they enjoy, it is only necessary to take the example of Britain, where medical care of a reasonably high quality is within easy reach of everybody.

Comparing the health record of social class V with that of social class 1, we find that within the less privileged group the death rate of adult men is almost double, the incidence of bronchitis is fivefold, of lung and stomach cancer threefold, the death rate between the ages of one month and one year is fivefold, maternal mortality is double, the incidence of illness in general in middle age is double, the incidence of arthritis and rheumatism is sixfold, absenteeism is six times greater, and the suicide rate among men is double.

Another important indication of the irrelevance of either the mode of delivery or the quality of medical care to the main-

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tenance of health is the fact that the changing pattern of disease in the latter half of the 20th century is almost identical in all industrial nations. Tropical and poverty-stricken countries do, of course, have their own peculiar problems.

Thus it is plain that any politician who claims that the physical well-being of British citizens, such as it is, can be attributed to our wonderful NHS which 'they' created and sustain is talking rubbish. And it is also plain that NHS consultants and GPs and other workers who claim that the health of the nation is in peril because the service is being starved of funds are also talking through their hats. *They* may be having not so much of a bonanza as heretofore, but the rest of us will go on suffering and thriving, dying and surviving, to a pattern forged by other forces altogether.

So who will bring about the next stage in our progress toward a healthier community in which we can all live well and zestfully until we die?

The politicians? Hardly. We now find it fashionable to pay lip service to the concept of preventive medicine, but are timid and ineffectual when it comes to the crunch. We shall soon, probably, have the fluoridation of water supplies and the wearing of seat belts made compulsory under the law. There may be further mild curbs on the hard-sell techniques employed by brewers and tobacco merchants. The Health Education Council may be given a few more pounds to spend on propaganda. A number of worthy research projects aimed at uncovering the roots of illness may be funded. But, left to themselves, the politicians can be counted upon to baulk the tougher issues. Too many of the reforms needed would be electorally unpopular. Too many powerful vested interests reap fat profits from the causes of disease. And when a needed and obviously worthwhile reform is asked for the politicians are too ready to say how much they agree, but how sorry they are that 'under the present stringent economic circumstances' they simply wouldn't be able to find the necessary cash, ignoring the fact that every exercise in preventive medicine, from family planning to the provision of decent drains, will pay for itself very shortly many times over.

Will it be the doctors who work the change? Never – not as a body. Some doctors are becoming acutely aware of the folly of our present attitudes to health, and see that we have the whole thing upside down. But as a profession the doctors are solidly disease orientated. They *enjoy* diagnosing and treating a constant flow of sick people, and the sicker the better. That is what they've been trained to do.

The unions? Unlikely. The unions have an increasing power to influence the manner in which industry shall be organised and behave, and the aims and activities and products of industry make a major impact on our health. But the unions don't consider the health of the community to be their responsibility. They want more work and more money for their members. They will resist curbs on harmful or inappropriate enterprises (including our swollen hospital system) if such curbs seem to threaten jobs. They are principally interested in industrial safety and disease from the point of view of the amount of danger money risks may earn and the amount of compensation payable to workers who suffer harm. They accept pollution if that is the price to be paid for a heavier wage packet. The TUC is about to launch an investigation into stress at work (including the sheer boredom of repetitive tasks). There is already good evidence that such stresses are responsible for many of the vague, psychosomatic illnesses which account for so much absenteeism. But if the TUC investigation supports this belief it seems likely that the findings will be used to back demands for higher pay for people in particularly trying jobs rather than to force employers to make the working day a pleasanter affair.

You and I, then? Will the great British public muster and demand reform? A slender chance indeed. Apart from our puny muscle we have learned to depend far too much upon many of the things which do us harm.

But perhaps all of us – politicians, doctors, trade unions and public alike – will eventually come to realise that we are paying too high a price in terms of health and happiness for our preoccupation with the business of making and acquiring and consuming ever more and more 'good things'. Perhaps we shall come to appreciate the truth that the physical and mental state of a community reflects its structure, pressures and priorities – that good health springs from the good society.

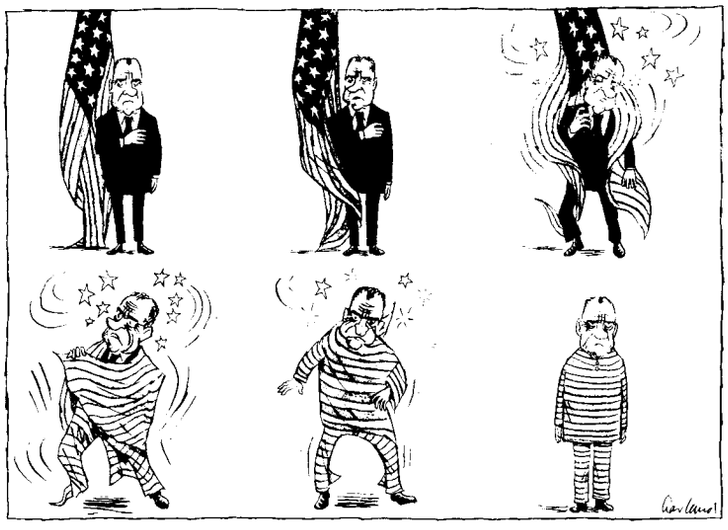
Then, slowly, change may come about.

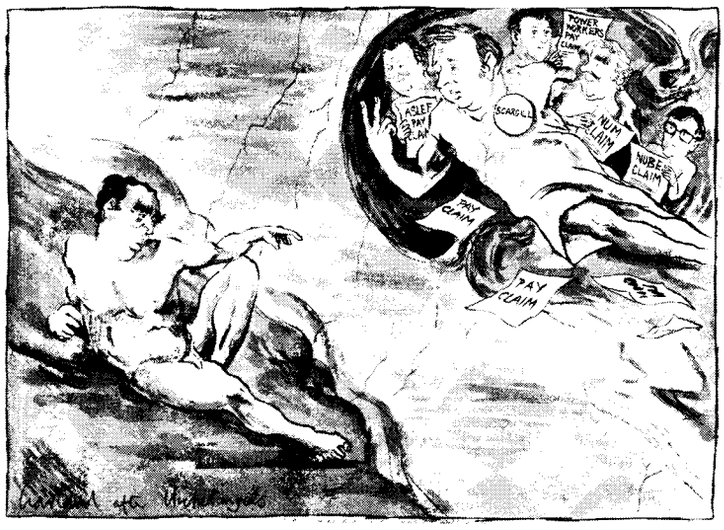
A SELECTION OF GARLAND

A wallet of ten prints of Garland's cartoons from the New Statesman

Last year in response to our readers' interest in Garland's work we published a collection of ten prints representative of his work for the New Statesman over the preceding three years.

The cartoons were selected as outstanding examples not only of Garland's skill as a draughtsman but also of the wit and perception which he brings to the passing political scene. Together they form a unique gallery of the personalities of the day.





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Profile: Norman Scott

The Person from Porlock

If anybody believes that the making of history is the exclusive preserve of great men, or strong men, or men of genius, wealth and influence, let him take a look at the career of Norman Scott. Without Mr Scott, it is obvious that Jeremy Thorpe would still be leader of the Liberal Party; it is quite possible that David Steel would have been lured away from politics; it is imaginable that the Lib-Lab pact would never have taken place. Were it not for Norman Scott, indeed, Margaret Thatcher might now be Prime Minister. And consider how much more we know about politics, as a result of the Scott affair. Without him, would we have ever heard of the war between Harold Wilson and MI5? Would the name and ravaged face of Peter Bessell be remembered by more than a handful of Liberals and past creditors? Great scandals provide a unique opportunity to observe the establishment in action. As Thorpe said to Cyril Smith: 'It's all lies, Cyril. I have nothing to hide. But in any case I've got the three most powerful pillars of the state on my side – Harold Wilson, Arnold Goodman and MI5.' A useless trio, as it turned out.

In contrast to these great men, consider Scott himself: 'Norman Valentine Josiffe,' as his passport has it: 'profession – gentleman.' The passport photograph, signed on the obverse by Peter Bessell, shows the excited, frightened eyes and the thin, unsatisfactory lips which have now become famous. In earlier photographs the lips are fuller and the face has spent less time weeping, but the debility is there nevertheless. It is the face of a failed suicide, the face of a man whose only method of coping is by involving others in the tragedy of his life. At very few moments in what we know of his career does Scott act decisively, off his own bat. Normally he is being helped out, or pushed around, or just talking, talking, talking.

One finds the type, perched on saloon bar stools across the country, hanging on to the first gin-and-tonic of the day. They are the outrageous celebrities of small communities – the actress-turned-antique-dealer, the victim of an early Fleet Street redundancy scheme, the shamefully mistreated black sheep of a great family. The barman is tolerant, he knows their stories by heart and his only concern is to avoid their bouncing cheques (hence the little notice in poker-work above his head). It never occurs to him that they really did know Nureyev that well, or that Lord Snowdon was quite such a bitch, or that Anna (Neagle)'s parties were quite such a bore.

But wait, what is this? A yellow Mazda roars into Barnstaple, and out steps a man who, according to his own version of events, must rank as the world's worst hired killer. He has, for a start, just spent a couple of fruitless weeks searching for his victim in Dunstable. He is unused to handling guns. According to Scott's version, he is wearing a red rally coat, he is afraid of dogs, and he stinks, positively stinks, of tobacco. From this time forth the Scott story, which, true or false, had never been very important, takes on a new significance. Andrew Gino Newton has arrived with a gun.

It is typical of Scott's deeply felt sense of victimisation, and of his credulity, that he should have believed Newton's account; that he should have found it likely that a hired detective (Newton) should arrive out of the blue to protect him from some (fictional) Canadian who was about to kill him. Newton told Scott that he would know when the danger was at hand, because his enemies would first attack something dear to his heart. Scott took this to mean that his son was about to be killed. He wrote to his wife to warn her of the danger.

There followed a period of Ealing tragedy, in which Newton tried to lure Scott on to the moors, but was foiled by Scott's inability to understand the arrangements he had made, and to turn up in the right place. Finally, they drove from Porlock to Barnstaple together. Scott was worried about the man who had been hired to protect him; he seemed very tired, the car was swerving around. Scott offered to drive, and Newton pulled into a lay-by. In Scott's description of the ensuing moments, the emphasis is all on the dog. There is little sense of personal danger:

> I ran round and ran through the headlights, and the car door was open on that side. I looked up. Well, Rinka was jumping around all over the moors, all happy – *woo-oo-oo! it's lovely on the moors!* – and it's really windy and cold and dark. And I said, 'Oh I'm sorry. I meant to get into the passenger seat, just move over and I would have driven. And now I'm going to have problems with Rinx, getting her in.' He said, 'Oh no.' Rinka by then had come up. She jumped up and

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gave me a big kiss. Then she looked up at him and I thought – she's going to jump up at him, and he doesn't like dogs.

A tender thought. At this moment Scott's voice changes.

He said: 'No, this is it.' He just went *voomp!* He just shot her. I just couldn't believe it. It was so horrible. It's impossible for you to comprehend, I expect, but you can't sort of see something that you love dying, and really think about yourself. She sort of drifted down. That was all I was looking at. He got behind my back, and he had this thing to my head, and I wasn't really aware except for this funny pushing. I was just watching her sinking down this hillock. I wasn't thinking about me. I said, 'You've shot Rinka,' and I was sort of screaming: 'You can't shoot Rinka. She's got nothing to do with it.'

But by now Rinka had everything to do with it. She was the first reason for the publication of Scott's story. When the press began to investigate, they found to their surprise that the local police were indeed taking his version seriously. In all the subsequent accusations and counter-accusations it is interesting to see how very little of Scott's version has been refuted. Newton told the court the Scott had been blackmailing him; Newton now denies this, and claims that Scott was telling the truth all along. Bessell claimed in a letter that Scott had been blackmailing him; Bessell now says that Scott was not a blackmailer. The *Sunday Times* devoted a whole vigorous page to denying Scott's credibility. A couple of weeks later, they published the letters which led to Thorpe's resignation.

What then was the motive of Scott, all this time? Why was he prepared to nag away, to pursue his 'case' in the face of public obloquy? For it is certain that Scott has been much more roughly treated in the press than Thorpe has. The *Sunday Mirror* printed its verdict on Scott in enormous letters: 'UGH!' it said. 'It is all decent people in Britain who are sick, Mr Scott. Sick at your behaviour. Ugh!' Was it publicity he wanted? Certainly he enjoyed being surrounded by journalists. On one occasion in Exeter, when Newton was on trial, he swept down the staircase of a leading hotel, singing to the assembled journalists below: 'I'm the queen in your copy' – to the tune of 'I'm the cream in your coffee.' And when the story began to die down last year, he became visibly depressed. 'You'll all go away and forget about me now, won't you?' he would say.

Or was the reason vindictiveness? Certainly, at times when he was unable to get through to Thorpe, he appears to have behaved vindictively in phoning Thorpe's mother, or allowing his wife to phone Thorpe's wife, to tell her their woes. But there is another reason for Scott's persistence – a reason of such banality that it almost takes the breath away. Scott claims that Thorpe, during the period of their alleged affair, had taken his insurance cards into his care. This made it impossible for him to work in England, or to receive his proper benefits when he was unemployed. Had the cards been found at an early stage, had the Liberals managed to set Scott's affairs in order instead of fobbing him off with Peter Bessell's fivers, it might just be that the whole business would have been contained. He might well be simply occupying his usual stool in an empty saloon bar, with a bored but patient barman polishing the glasses, listening with half an ear to unlikely accounts of the high life our Norman used to lead. It might well be that nobody would be believing a word he said.

Jane Corbin

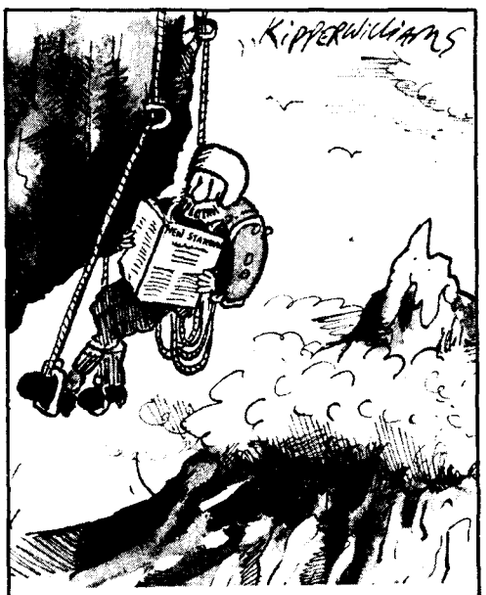
The Luton Mystery

A murder was committed eight years ago. Three men were convicted; 13 judges in five courts have heard their case for a total of 36 days; two of those men are still serving life sentences and yet that murder remains essentially unsolved to this day. The file might now be considered closed, all legal channels have been exhausted, but to add to the disturbing factors already present in the case a new witness has come forward this year, the way the police conducted the inquiry is becoming increasingly open to criticism and startling new allegations have been made by a man who is an old acquaintance of the policeman who headed the murder investigation.

On the afternoon of 10 September 1969 a group of men set out in a convoy of two cars and a transit van to rob a small post office in Luton. The robbery went horribly wrong and the postmaster died when they tried to force him at gunpoint to give up the keys to his post office. The Murder Squad were called in to lead the hunt for the killers; the man in charge was Detective Chief Superintendent Kenneth Drury. He was 'helped in his enquiries' by a man named Alfred Mathews who had been detained and charged with the murder. Mathews admitted that he had gone along to Luton but insisted that he had been asked to 'collect a parcel' by one of the others and he had no idea of the real purpose of the raid. He maintained he was not even at the scene of the crime. On Drury's advice Mathews turned Queen's Evidence, all charges were dropped and he became the number one witness for the prosecution.

The men he named as taking part in the murder were Patrick Murphy, David Cooper and Michael McMahon. The three men stated loudly and clearly from the outset that they were totally innocent and that Mathews's story in respect of each of them was a complete fabrication. Each refused an offer to plead guilty to lesser charges. There were obvious inconsistencies in Mathews's evidence, there was a lack of positive identification by eyewitnesses and, most important of all, valuable witnesses were denied to the defence by the police. (For example an alibi witness for Cooper, who was claimed for the prosecution). It was not until years later that the defence became aware of the existence of statements which challenged the evidence the men had been convicted on. Despite all this, the three men were found guilty and sentenced to a minimum of 20 years' imprisonment. Mathews walked out of court a free man and in recognition of his services received a £2,000 reward from the Post Office. The men he had helped to convict were undoubtably petty crooks but Mathews was a different kettle of fish entirely. He had clocked up 20 years of prison sentences for offences ranging from assault on the police to involvement with explosives.

In the eight years since the original trial the case has made legal history by being referred to the Court of Appeal an un-



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precedented four times. On the second occasion the conviction of Patrick Murphy was considered 'unsafe' and was quashed. It is the function of the Appeal Court to decide whether the verdict of the jury at the original trial was 'unsafe' or 'unsatisfactory'; not for the appellant to prove his innocence. At the first appeal, Murphy's, the implication of this was that Mathews's evidence which placed Murphy at the scene of the crime was 'unsafe'. Where did this leave Cooper and McMahon who had been as strongly placed in the case as Murphy? This must have worried the Home Office for they sent their cases back to the Appeal Courts twice – once in 1974 and again in 1976. Both times the court upheld their convictions. Cooper and McMahon have served eight years of their sentences; another 12 stretch before them.

Much of Mathews's evidence stood unchallenged because over 800 statements, some of which were very detailed and contradicted the argument of Mathews's evidence, were withheld from the defence by the police. A key witness in Cooper's defence, his tailor, who claimed Cooper was with him at the crucial time was visited by the police who applied what can only be termed emotional blackmail – 'How would you feel if it was one of your relations who got shot and saw all his guts hanging out?' – and he was pressured into declaring himself uncertain about the day and time. He insists to this day that Cooper was with him that afternoon. Another witness gave evidence that one of the getaway cars was a red Mercedes sports – the type of car that Cooper owned – which Mathews said was used in the raid. What only came out accidentally in court was that the witness had made ten previous statements saying that the car he had seen was a red MG sports; he only changed his mind after a certain amount of persuasion by the police. What also came out in a later appeal was a statement by a criminal acquaintance of Mathews, who remembered that Mathews had owned a red MG sports which he used specifically for crime. The court declined to accept the evidence of a dubious character and instead upheld the dubious evidence of Mathews.

In the case of McMahon, Mathews alleges he drove the transit van containing the sawn-off shotgun from London to Luton, but McMahon, however, was banned from driving and was well known by police in the North London area; would he have driven a van containing a firearm in broad daylight past police who knew his face and his record so well? Secondly on the day of the murder McMahon had appeared at Thames Magistrates Court on a charge of petty theft. His case was heard at 2 p.m. but might well not have been heard until 4 p.m. which would have made complicity in a raid more than 20 miles away almost impossible. Is it likely he would have planned a raid for the same afternoon as a court hearing at an unspecified time?

There are two witnesses who have never been called to give evidence in any court connected with the Luton murder. They saw a group of men making their escape from the scene of the murder, they saw the driver of the van. They say it was not McMahon or Cooper, it was Mathews, and he was not 'collecting a parcel'. This evidence if heard on oath – and it has not been – and accepted would disprove once and for all Mathews claim that he had nothing to do with the actual murder or the setting up of the job. This is further outlined by the evidence of two men who claim that Mathews had approached them earlier and asked them to take part in a raid on a Luton post office. They opted out when they discovered that a gun was included in the plan.

The weight of evidence against Mathews and his tale of 'collecting a parcel' grows heavier and heavier. One of the judges declared openly in court that Mathews was clearly more deeply involved than he cared to admit; but they could not believe that a man would do something as deliberate and wicked as naming three innocent men in a murder. People who know Mathews have said that there was one thing that always terrified him – the thought of going to prison. Forced into a corner with the prospect of a life sentence before him, how much more likely would he be to name three innocent men who could not point the finger at him as the mastermind behind the whole operation? One of the judges wanted to know if Mathews, who had received the reward money on the recommendation of Drury, had handed any of that money back to the police. Mathews emphatically denied doing this. His bank statements were produced in court and it was seen that on the same day that he had paid the £2,000 in he had drawn out £700. He claimed this was a present for his wife but on cross-examination couldn't remember what she had done with it. The judge drily remarked that he found this explanation 'unconvincing'. At the time that the query about the money was being put to Mathews the policeman who had led the investigation, Kenneth Drury, was himself waiting to be tried on charges of accepting bribes from Soho porn merchants. In July of this year, in a blaze of publicity – 'Police Chief was on Porn King's Payroll' – Drury was sent down for eight years on corruption charges.

It is that same 'Porn King' – James Humphries – whose evidence put Drury and several other detectives behind bars who has made further allegations about Drury. In a sworn statement recently revealed by Thames Television Humphries says that Drury discussed the Luton case with him in 1971, two years before Murphy's successful appeal. Drury stated that he knew that Murphy was innocent and that Mathews was guilty. Murphy, whom he described as 'a little bugger' had, he said, been 'framed'. Drury went on to say that he had 'had a drink out of the case', policemen's slang for accepting bribes. Most amazing was Drury's alleged remark to Humphries that before he joined the Flying Squad Mathews had worked for him as an informer, and 'was instructed to set up a raid on the Luton post office'. If this statement is given the same credence as Humphries's other evidence in court against Drury then the conclusion would be that the police deliberately set up a raid that cost one man his life and may have put three innocent men behind bars. Even more sinister is the thought that three or four men capable of shooting a man in cold blood may be walking free.

The cracks in the case are widening; people are openly concerned that there may have been a tragic miscarriage of justice. A 'Free Cooper and McMahon' campaign has been set up by relatives of the two men and their solicitors who continue to work and campaign for the men unpaid so convinced are they of their clients' innocence. There is concern among MPs and a meeting is to be held at the House of Commons next week; Dr McDonald, McMahon's MP, plans an adjournment debate on the case this month; she is determined to bring the matter before the Home Secretary until something is done. The only hope now must lie in an independent inquiry or a compassionate decision from Merlyn Rees.

A 'lurking doubt' as to the safety of a conviction is enough under British law to justify its quashing, as was clear in the case of Patrick Murphy. The judges who heard the appeals of Cooper and McMahon do not seem however to have applied this fundamental principle to the case. They ruled that the original jury's verdict of 'Guilty' was 'entirely correct' although the jury had arrived at their decision largely through considering the evidence of Alfred Mathews 'a man with a long and bad criminal record' (Hon. Mr Justice Cusack) who was far more 'involved than he cared to admit' (Lord Justice Atkinson) and whose 'unconvincing' explanation (Lord Justice Roskill) of the events of 10 September 1969 was even described as 'a cock and bull story' (Lord Justice Lawton). There is a clear and obvious doubt as to the guilt of Cooper and McMahon and more than a lurking doubt as to the part played in the whole affair by Mathews. Is it justice that the former are facing 12 more years as 'Category A' prisoners and the latter is free on the streets of London?

Roger Woddis

The Buck Starts Here

'Unless President Carter can learn to work with Congress and the business community, he will continue to fumble.' – *Business Week.*

Where is the smile of yesteryear,
The blue-eyed boy, the magic touch?
Has he become a man of straw,
The god of whom we hoped so much?
Hard is his fate, and hard the boot
Aimed at the presidential crutch.

We were believers once, when ends
Were more promotable than means;
Our eyes were blind with stars until
They fell into a row of beans.
Taxes and time have greyed his hair
And frayed his charismatic jeans.

He ducks beneath the eagle's wing,
And reads the message in its beak:
Nothing in life or politics,
However softly you may speak,
Is shorter than a four-year term
Or lasts as long as *Business Week.*

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London Diary

☐ Tariq Ali's ambush of Sir Richard Dobson was, to my mind, in the best tradition of guerrilla journalism. I hope it brings new readers to *Socialist Challenge*, which is shaping to be the liveliest and least doctrinaire of the radical weeklies. Peter Cooper, the lad with the tape-recorder, came over at Monday's press conference as nervous, diffident, patently bruised by the row with his Dad, but deeply serious and principled. He told us that Dobson had spoken from typed notes and was obviously delivering his standard after-dinner speech. As *The Times*, blowing the gaff, has said about his anti-trade union views: 'Those responsible for appointing him to the job could hardly have been ignorant of his general feelings on the subject.' Why then was he appointed? Why must Labour Governments repeatedly hand over such positions to men fixedly opposed to Labour policy and to the social-democratic outlook in its mildest form? And why has the National Enterprise Board, which should be concerned to regain trade union confidence, been allowed to come out with the blatant untruth (as a full transcript shows it to be) that the extracts from Dobson's speech 'give a totally false impression of his personal and social attitudes'? What public men say in private is the truest guide to what they think, as every journalist who has ever had an unattributable interview knows. An interesting precedent from wartime days was the disclosure by Jack Tanner, the (then) left-wing leader of the Engineers' Union, of remarks by the Minister of Aircraft Production to the effect that he didn't approve of the alliance with Soviet Russia. This evoked the same outcries about sneaking, but Churchill dropped the Minister in his next reshuffle. A closer and more recent precedent comes from America, where truth is rightly considered more important than etiquette; when Earl Butz, President Ford's Secretary of Agriculture, was reported as making racist cracks, there were no laments about his resignation.

☐ The Dobson story also casts a revealing light on Fleet Street, mythically supposed to be always on the alert for scoops. When Tariq Ali obtained the tape, he realised that it was too big a story for his little weekly and offered it to various dailies for publication the day before *Socialist Challenge* came out, or simultaneously. Some *Daily Mirror* staff men were keen, but the idea was vetoed by Tony Miles, the editorial director (no kin to our chess master). A *Daily Express* journalist listened to the tape and gave the verdict: 'No story.' Only two papers ran the story simultaneously with *Socialist Challenge*. They were *The Times* and the *Washington Post* . . .

☐ By Sunday we had a fairly clear picture of Sir Richard's 'personal and social attitudes', so it was intriguing to read in the *Sunday Times* that he has a cultured background – well, so has Enoch Powell – and in his leisure hours translates Baudelaire. I thought that a sample might be interesting. The original reads:

Tes pieds sont aussi fins que tes mains,
et ta hanche
Est large à faire envie à la plus belle blanche;
A l'artiste pensif ton corps est doux et cher;
Tes grands yeux de velours sont plus
noirs que ta chair.

Now for the inimitable style of the English version:

Nice feet, nice hands, and what a surprise
To find a wog with an arse that size;
Those artist johnnies would even prize
Your blackish flesh and big black eyes.

☐ Toby has taken to scanning the park for armed men before talking to Henry, the Great Dane. Henry says that London parks are still safe, but you're asking for trouble if you get involved in walks in lonely places like Exmoor. Jason, the Airedale, advises Henry to stick close to his attractive blonde mistress and considers that, in view of human prejudice, the association of dogs with homosexuals is a worrying trend. They'll be linking us with paedophiles next, he warns. Lara, the red setter with enchanting black patches, says indignantly that the lowest form of life is someone who will accept money to kill a man and then kill a dog. I trust that the silent majority of British bipeds will agree with Lara.

☐ As a devotee of the personal ads in the *New York Review of Books*, I hope that there will be a reward for the man who needs (not wants) a slender, total woman for a fortnight in Alaska in September 1978. If there's one thing worse than a fortnight in Alaska with a fat woman, it would be a fortnight in Alaska with a fraction of a fat woman.

☐ The final volume of Dick Crossman's diaries contains an account of his insistence on publishing the report on Ely mental hospital, where patients had been brutalised by nurses. After bits of the report had been leaked to the press, Crossman discovered that the full facts had been known to the Department of Health for three or four years and had 'gone on file'. Until the press leak broke the scandal, the report had never been shown to the Minister – doubtless because the civil servants knew that Dick was the kind of madman who would insist on publication and also divert funds to improving conditions (this, as the Chief Nursing Officer of the time truly says, would never have happened but for the disclosure). Coincidentally, this week has also seen Crossman's more docile successor, David Ennals, refusing to publish the official report on Friern psychiatric hospital, where voluntary patients have been illegally injected and locked up against their will, and where the tally of broken bones is higher than in 1866. Repeat: broken bones. Repeat: 1866. Mr Ennals says that he wants to preserve 'faith in the confidentiality of opinions, facts and even worries'. Repeat: facts. I can see a case for stopping the publication of unproven allegations which may injure innocent people; no case for keeping secret an official report. Though parts of the Friern report surfaced through press leaks in July, Mr Ennals says that he hasn't seen it – nor, it appears, asked to see it. Do we need a Freedom of Information Act? You bet we do.

☐ I don't think anyone would be allowed to make a comedy film in the new building of the Bank for International Settlements in Basle, but the thought is tempting. Twenty stories high, the building has 1,575 windows, none of which can be opened; all are proof against Molotov cocktails as well as bullets. Other features include halon-gas smoke detectors, closed-circuit television, five miles of archive shelves, three restaurants, and a wine-cellar with space for 39,000 bottles. There are five lifts, but staff are to be encouraged to walk upstairs as part of the bank's keep-fit campaign. When I think of those 39,000 bottles I can only hope that there's some sort of rescue service. The bank, keeping up with the times, wanted to use solar heating, but the Swiss electricity board threatened to retaliate by not switching the lights on. The building therefore has a hot-water system supplied by the city of Basle, and using energy derived from burning garbage. If this corner of civilisation runs out of garbage there will be a breakdown of international banking settlements. Capitalism supplies its own parables.

☐ 'Where's your literary paragraph?' demanded a colleague. I offer this book advertisement, seen in the tube: 'The violent, moving story of genocide, prostitution and corruption, to rank with *Papillon* as the best in true-life adventure.'

Mervyn Jones

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ Sex, hanging and pets are likely to be discussed at the November session of the Church of England's General Synod. Several other controversial subjects are on the agenda in the list of Private Members' Motions, including Rhodesia, the production of weapons, and Soviet imperialism. It is doubtful however whether these motions will be discussed owing to shortage of time. – *Luton Evening Post* (T. Hopkins)

☐ 'People from my sort of background needed grammar schools to compete with children from privileged homes like Shirley Williams and Anthony Wedgwood Benn.' – *Financial Times* (John Martyn)

☐ Cordon bleu cook is required for Directors of firm of Consulting Engineers in Croydon. Two dining rooms serving maximum of 18. Good salary plus luncheon vouchers. – Small ad in *The Times* (M. Shoot)

☐ A Suffolk family facing the demolition of their house at Whepstead, near Bury St Edmunds yesterday issued an open invitation to the public to see it for themselves. The Jurkiewicz family of seven is fighting to live on as tenants over what was designed as the first private H-bomb fall-out shelter in East Anglia. Mrs Ada Jurkiewicz said, 'We are holding open house as from today.' Owner of the property, Mrs B. J. Carlisle-Dodd, said she agrees with the Environmental Health Officer that the property is unfit. – *East Anglian Daily Times* (Margot Bernal)

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University Forum

Margaret Gaskin*

The Machismo of the Left

It has become fashionable in the national press to talk of the antics of the Socialist Workers' Party over the last few months as the actions of a 'fascist Left'. In fact, with their attitude of 'What they need is a damn good hiding to teach them a lesson', the ultra-Lefties of the moment more closely resemble retired Army colonels from Cheltenham. The only difference is that they regret the passing of the Spanish Civil War (a spell in the International Brigade would have made a man of you, son) and not the end of National Service. The idea that physical strength can be substituted for the less spectacular and more difficult task of political education heralds the return of the machismo image of the Left. The sturdy Russian peasant behind the plough has been replaced by the sturdy British student behind a line of policemen but the message is the same – it's a butch life on the Left. Now speaking personally, I would rather the socialist Utopia, once we reach it, wasn't run by tough young men whose idea of an ideological debate is a swift bundle in the playground with the last one left standing declared 'Trotsky of the Day'. However, I can see that after our brief summer of equality, we women are going to be pushed into the background again while the big strong men show us what politics is about.

It should come as no surprise to any of the women involved in student politics anyway. Yes, I know we have a lady President now but if you think that indicates a lack of prejudice among the Broad Left, you should consider that she had to serve a long apprenticeship to prove her competence – a condition clearly not imposed on the previous (male) incumbent. The rampant male chauvinism on the Left has, if anything, yielded even more slowly than elsewhere because it is protected by the conviction of moral rectitude which is handed out free with the membership card of the socialist party of your choice. An interesting illustration of the current condition of the student Left was provided at a recent NUS conference when an after-hours Broad Left dance was gate-crashed by a contingent of irate Trotskyists (or whatever). After much posturing on both sides of the 'if you don't leave you're gonna be dead' variety (and those words were actually used), the conflict resolved itself into an ideological Eurovision Song Contest with the far Left singing a rude song about the Broad Left and the BL simultaneously blasting out a scurrilous ditty along the lines of 'All Trots are . . .' This bizarre situation progressed through some genuine political songs written by people who had cause to know what the cliché word 'struggle' really means until we arrived at the Chilean folk songs. We then had the surreal spectacle of two groups of able-bodied, passionately committed young men, machoed up to the hilt, straining at the leash and restrained from physical violence only by great self control, six feet of dance floor and a middle-class upbringing directing their energies instead into trying to outdo each other at singing the *same song*. After that the two groups drifted away aimlessly with much 'Boy, were they lucky! Come the Revolution they're gonna be the *first* ones against the wall'.

The attitudes which have only recently come to public attention have thus been plain to see at NUS conferences for some years now. A curious amalgam of *Lord of the Rings* and *Boy's Own Paper*, the basic idea is to get *all* the goodies on one side and *all* the baddies on the other and then to have one gigantic battle in which the forces of evil are finally destroyed. Unfortunately the ranks of the baddies, especially as defined by the fragments of the Far Left, appear alarmingly strong and perfectly capable of spoiling the end of the story. Even if this were not so, surely it is disturbing to find 'socialists' of any hue coming out so strongly for the idea that certain people are beyond redemption and can only be brought into line by physical punishment. I have heard of many methods of combatting alienation. I think the one that advocates a sharp blow on the side of the head is the one I like least. I may be a coward but I don't mind admitting that the thought of facing a man a foot taller and a couple of stone heavier than me in a stand-up fight makes me sick with fright. O.K., so I flatter myself that I would do it if I had to in an emergency to protect myself or someone weaker. But voluntarily and for my principles? No way. However right I may be, in that situation I am going to find myself on the floor, smashed to a pulp and my principles down there with me. Or if my principles survive a battering, would not my adversary's also even if he were defeated? In which case the whole exercise would be pretty useless.

When a phenomenon like racism is characteristic of attitudes deeply embedded in our society, I am seriously suspicious of a tactic which divides the sheep from the goats and consigns the latter to the flames. The vehement conviction that many left-wingers have that racism is *other* people would no doubt prove an interesting case-study for the psychiatrist. Being on the other side to the baddies automatically puts one amongst the goodies and can absolve a lot of extraneous guilt. I have heard enough of the veiled racism of the type 'Some of my best friends are . . .' from respectable left-wing sources to suspect that this may be one attraction of the far Left's tactics. What any left-winger is doing with such a Minichaen view of morality anyway is beyond me. After all, socialism has always been about creating a society fit for people to live in, not a society of people considered fit to live – that really *does* smack of fascism.

Apart from the ineffectiveness of bully-boy tactics, surely they will stand condemned by all who have fought for the idea that the healthy young male does not have dominion over those he is able to intimidate physically, no matter how righteously he operates it. A recent anti-racist march showed up the limitations of such tactics. All the old bravado and mock-heroics were punctured when a white boy of about nine began to yell 'Up the NF. Out with the niggers.' The marchers were taken aback. All would have preferred to have a man to deal with – did it still count as Hero of the Revolution if you gave a young lad a kicking? As it happened, Providence intervened in the shape of a black boy of the same age who proceeded to administer divine retribution to the offender's crotch; thus sparing the marchers too much disturbing reflection. In a sense the black population is performing the same service for the Macho Left in general. Nobody doubts the right of blacks to be protected or to protect themselves from the violence the NF performs and incites. If the SWP was interested merely in assisting this defensive work they would hear no protests from me. However, it is clear that they are more interested in party fortunes and personal egos, from the way they continue to posture and challenge the NF, even though this encourages more rather than less attacks on the black population. Perhaps because these occur singly in black alleys rather than in monster set-piece battles the SWP considers them a price worth paying. Well, they say – they're not the ones who pay.

Anyone who has spoken to NF sympathisers will know that the Front's mainstay is fear – sheer, blind, irrational panic in the face of the unknown. It manifests itself in ugly brutality but its basis is defensive. If anyone thinks that a show of force will scare this fear away they must be very naïve. After years of being misled and lied to by an irresponsible press many people are willing to believe the garbage spouted by the Front. It is these falsehoods and not misguided believers that are the root of the problem, and those who attempt to buy cheap glory by attacking the problem from the wrong end may come to find they have to pay a very high price indeed.

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First Person

Arthur Marshall

Od's Bodikins

A short mini-test for the literary. Who wrote the following, and to whom, and at about what date? 'The world grows odder and odder. I perceive that we must resign ourselves to life in a lunatic asylum.' But for the rather dated verb 'perceive', one would think, so demented has everything become, that the words were written yesterday, perhaps by Sir Harold while mulling over those curious enoblements, or possibly by Mr Heath, the Pride of Peking (third visit there triumphantly achieved) in a newsy bulletin home to Broadstairs. Not so. They go back to 1919 and the country fit for heroes to live in. They were penned by Lytton Strachey to Katherine Mansfield, both of them compulsive letter-writers of a hyper-emotional kind in an age when, for some, there was ample leisure for letting off steam, not to say hot air, via the Basildon. Nowadays, knee-deep in chores as we all are – opening a tin of Pal for Rover, darting to the Co-op, being kind to one's hands with Fairy Liquid, turning our armpits into charm-pits and wondering whether the cold leg will 'do' for yet another trouble-free meal – exhaustion puts paid to any but the very briefest of communications ('All well here. Forgive h'ste').

And speaking of haste, have you seen that it is going to take our gallant Post Office no fewer than 71 days to get Christmas cards to the Near East by Santa time? Ten weeks does seem rather a long time. This is one of the points I would have welcomed raising recently with the P.O. representative who was invited to join me, athirst for facts, on Thames TV. No representative appeared, however, though splendid Tom Jackson turned up, eyes merrily twinkling through those delightfully whiskery whiskers. The P.O. sent, rather feebly I thought, an explanatory letter instead, which allowed none of the keen cross-questioning that I had been planning. It did emerge though that the restitution of the Sunday post had only been turned down on a vote by a pretty small majority of the workers (in Devon, I need hardly say, our local postmen, aiming to please and not at all minding the overtime cash, are all for it). But why should the matter be decided in this fashion? It is news to me that a monopolistic public service should be run for the convenience of those who man it. Is it not time that the monopoly was ended? A little healthy competition would brace the P.O. up no end, and I bet that Marks & Spencer could whizz our letters to and fro twice as fast and at half the cost.

A series of recent newspaper items did indeed persuade me, pop-eyed with amazement, that we are all in a bin. It is, alas, with no sense of national pride that I see that a Northamptonshire building worker, holding, appalling thought, more than 80 world records for eating and drinking (113 doughnuts went down in seven minutes), has been whisked off to California to promote, in what must surely be a gale of hiccoughs, doughnuts in a food store chain. And what, meanwhile, of life on the building site? What happens, may I ask, about that uncompleted toilet floor at 'Chatsworth'? What of the crazy paving at 'Beau Rivage'? Just a cheery welcome back from the foreman, I suppose, and a few noisy belches as the champion at last installs the bidet at 'Meadowsweet'.

Well then, what on earth is one to make of a Nottinghamshire public library that has managed to acquire a licence to sell alcohol, and will this additional attraction become universal? Shuffling one's way through the Denise Robins, will one suddenly come upon a crate of light ale? Will there be alcoholic stimulants in the Barbara Cartland alcove ('I'd like *Love Rides Pillion*, please, and a small rum-and-lime'). Our excellent local librarian, Miss Foljambe, ace nailer-down of treasures ('I've been able to sit on the new Le Carré for you'), can hardly be expected to double her exciting and refined duties with those of a barmaid ('What's yours, cheeky?'). And where will such diversifications end? Will solicitors now sell sandwiches on the side ('Those double-deckers are 35p')?

Oddities are really everywhere. I note that a renowned and popular illusionist and hypnotist from Ilford, kindly demonstrating to admirers how to drive a car while blindfolded and the handiest of knacks to have up one's sleeve, let his clutch smartly in and ran his Renault full tilt into the back of a van containing a police constable, who was very far from pleased. And then, again in Northamptonshire, I see that a tiger's head and skin, pinched from a Royal Anglian drill hall, had been fitted with false teeth by the Army Dental Corps ('A little wider, please') during what must have been a singularly slack period in the cavity world. And when I saw in the newspaper a headline reading 'Three-minute tornado lifts bus off ground', my sympathetic thoughts went out to American friends living on the Eastern seaboard and already sufficiently harried by Hurricane Hannah, or whatever, only to find, on reading further, that it was a tornado in our very own Lincolnshire. I only hope that such phenomena remain there. Bowling through Kensington on a shopping spree during a London visit, I do not wish to find my No. 9 suddenly sucked up in a whirlwind and dumped on the roof of Barkers.

Unusual happenings are not, I observe, confined to the purely human world. A sturgeon weighing as much as three largish men has been caught off Lowestoft, of all places, smoked and sold (to Harrods, natch) for £800 and is now doubtless gracing some rich Arab's W1 penthouse fridge. And in Tanzania there has been a grave miscarriage of justice. A lion recently shot dead for its man-eating activities has been discovered to have had only three legs and was therefore in no position to stalk and get a satisfactory purchase on its victims. Local residents, looking sharply about them, are convinced that the real man eater is a woman turned into a lion by the witch doctor, a triumph for women's lib.

What else? Staff at a miners' canteen near Chesterfield are selling, in addition to food, 'saucy undies' (for the wives, I do hope). A diamond-studded skateboard with gold-plated ends has been snapped up by a Persian buyer for £1,943. And a Peterborough clerk has been awarded £2,000 for suggesting, to what would seem to be a rather slow-thinking board, that all pipes and valves on their diesel engine plant should be well lagged to prevent heat loss.

The oddest and saddest for the last. Leyland, and its lunatic, lemming-like attempts at mass suicide. It is no business of mine to discuss the unions' rights and wrongs so I will merely say that the effect on the public has been disastrous, and I fear irreparably so. Down here we discuss, in our limited way, this and that, and we would all of us now think twice before buying a Leyland car, or indeed a British car of any sort. We want to be quite sure of getting our money's worth and foreigners seem a better bet. We are none of us rich enough to be loyal. We are only a small pocket of worry and dissatisfaction, a mere drop in the ocean. But there will be other pockets, other drops, and drops become, in due course, torrents, and torrents sweep things away.

This Scotland

☐ In a chapter of accidents in an Edinburgh antique shop yesterday, a woman was shot and an antique badly damaged. – *Scotsman* (Deirdre Eadie)

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Letters to the Editor

The Northampton Story

Sir, The 'Northampton Story', as narrated by Maureen Colquhoun (NS 21 October) leaves much to be desired with regard to accuracy and relevance.

The simple truth is that she was dropped by her marginal constituency party for one reason: she had lost the support of the majority of her party workers, and (from information gathered by these workers) she had lost the support also of the Labour voters as a whole. The procedure to censure an MP and select an alternative candidate is lengthy and arduous – in Northampton it has taken more than six months – and during this time there has been ample opportunity to assess the feeling within the constituency. The procedure is scrupulously monitored by the Regional Officer at all times. He would appear to be satisfied that there have been no irregularities. Maureen Colquhoun's description of the numbers of people who attended, or did not attend, meetings on various occasions is inaccurate.

Why, exactly, did she lose support? The reasons why any one individual rejected Maureen Colquhoun are complex and personal to that individual but there was general agreement on the main reasons for the disillusionment.

Early in 1976, the MP had attended a meeting of her Executive Committee where she was made aware that she was being adversely criticised with regard to her public image and her poor attendance in the constituency. Following this meeting she started to circulate an outline of her monthly programme but failed to improve her attendance. The 'Talk-In' meetings she refers to in her 'story' were organised only *after* the censure motion had been presented to the GMC (a year later).

With regard to the Lesbian issue, it must be made clear that the criticism of Maureen Colquhoun started *before* the gossip columnists showed interest in her private life, and that she had already lost the first vote of the censure procedure *before* she publicised the fact that she was a Lesbian. In fact, in the only statement she made to the GMC on her private life prior to this vote, Maureen Colquhoun is recorded as having denied the insinuations of the gossip columnists. There is no way, therefore, in which Maureen Colquhoun's Lesbianism could have influenced the vote of the GMC in August, or have initiated the move to have her stand down – her share of the GMC vote actually *increased* after she chose to announce in September that she was a Lesbian!

Whether to be a homosexual is, or is not, an electoral liability, is an interesting question, but it was not a question which was asked with regard to Maureen Colquhoun in Northampton. The real reasons for her rejection are very clear in the minds of the people of Northampton.

P. C. HEANEY

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Shock Therapy

Sir, Christopher Price's article on electroconvulsive therapy (NS 14 October) comes in the wake of an important speech by David Ennals, Secretary of State for Social Services, on the right of mental patients to refuse treatment. Mr Price credits MIND with a measure of lobbying success in this area. We had hoped that this success would be reflected in the Secretary of State's speech – but it was not. Mr Ennals wanted to make it clear that professionals should have the right to treat the unwilling patient.

As a major mental health charity, MIND is constantly approached by patients and their relatives regarding the treatment they receive from the mental health services. Some of these patients have gained great benefit from ECT, and it would be their choice of treatment, should they suffer a relapse into a depressive illness. Nonetheless, we are greatly concerned by numerous cases which come to our attention where the treatment is imposed without the patient's consent and without adequate consultation with the nearest relative. In some of these cases the treatment is given to informal patients or to patients admitted to hospital for 'observation'. In these instances, we have sought to protect the interests of the patient and have pursued legal courses of action.

There are also cases where ECT is given to people who are considered to have behaviour problems or to those suffering from schizophrenia. The Royal College of Psychiatry has, itself, indicated that there is no hard evidence to suggest that the treatment is indicated in these cases.

Finally, MIND cannot ignore the psychiatric literature which suggests the possibility that ECT may have pernicious after-effects, including loss of memory and reasoning power, apathy, listlessness and other mood changes. We are currently exploring the rights of the individuals who are suffering from these ill-effects. We trust that the views of MIND will be considered by the Secretary of State, as Christopher Price suggests. We do not support the abolitionist position which unwittingly screams for the total elimination of ECT. We do, however, believe that the patient should have the right to be fully informed of the nature of the treatment and to choose whether to receive it.

LARRY O. GOSTIN
Legal Officer

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Sir, A propos Christopher Price's article on ECT: in 1966 I worked as a temporary nursing assistant during my summer vacation (I was usually employed as a teacher in London) at the Carlton Hayes Mental Hospital at Narborough in Leicestershire. During my period of work there – approximately six weeks – I worked on a number of wards, with patients of various classifications, from the severely subnormal long-stay patients to voluntary informal cases. Some of the latter were similar to those referred to in your article: people with cases of depression or 'nervous breakdown', or students who had overwhelming exam tension etc.

Patients of the latter kind had ECT, I think, twice a week and while I worked on the admissions ward ('Nelson' ward it was called then, and may still be so called, for all I know) it was part of my duties to help in the administering of ECT. My job was basically to hold patients down during the convulsions of the body – sometimes extremely violent – which followed the ECT. The risk of injury was stressed. I remember one crisis when a patient (a hairdresser from Ibstock, Leics.) swallowed his tongue during these convulsions, could not breathe, and went purple in the face owing to cyanosis. I suppose we tried for some two minutes or so to remove the tongue, in the end successfully because the male nurse supervising the session had 'luckily' (in his own words) put the tongue forceps on the trolley. In discussion afterwards the nurses agreed that the forceps were not always available, and had they not been there on that occasion serious brain damage might have resulted during an attempt to bring them.

I was and am appalled by the (a) amateurisness of the whole procedure, (b) use of untrained staff like myself – I had never administered help with ECT before, and had no nursing training – (c) risk of injury and (d) the general fear and tension which the ECT sessions engendered and which were destructive of any feeling of therapeutic community which the ward avowedly strove for. I am not able to assess the effectiveness of ECT in individual cases; I knew, though, of patients who would rather abscond than submit to it, and I feel that the risks and tensions and disruption caused would vitiate any general value in the treatment unless there could be proved a reliable, generally agreed set of criteria for its usefulness.

DONALD P. M. SALTER

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Equal Education

Sir, Mr Torben Calvert-Lee (Letters, 21 October) seems to have made a personal affront against Dr John Rae rather than contributing any positive remarks about 'Education and Equality', which was supposedly the subject of the letter.

If he is going to be so aggressive in his personal accusations, he ought not only to have produced some constructive reasoning in defence of his argument; not only to have refrained from wild generalisations such as 'the last thing the public school headmasters believe in is a planned economy', but, most important, to have discussed the subject of the letter in slightly more detail.

With reference to Mr Calvert-Lee's obvious bias towards equality, it might be interesting to note that he was a contemporary of mine, studying under Dr Rae at one of the most expensive public schools in the country.

DANIEL S. R. LEWIS

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Indignant India

Sir, Mr Martin Amis, while reviewing (NS 21 October) Mr V. S. Naipaul's *India: A Wounded Civilisation*, should have made allowances for the author's known hostility towards the religion, culture and country of his forefathers. He should not be encouraged, in the NS of all places, to peddle India's 'failings' to the Christian world of his adoption. He should try leaving India alone.

HRIDAY N. PANDEY

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Not So Innocent

Sir, W. S. Brownlie (Letters, 21 October) would have us believe that teachers mostly hit 'naughty little boys'. But this is okay, as it's quick and approved of by pupil surveys.

I met one very naughty little boy who received endless care and patience from his teachers as they tried to help him with his problems, and prevent his exclusion. However, he did have one complaint about the school. Every time he went to Physical Education he was 'slippered' for not bringing his kit. Despite numerous letters to his family, no kit was bought for him, and so he began truanting from P.E. I confirmed the story with other children, who also said that the teacher concerned 'slippered' the last boy out of the swimming bath each session. No doubt a 'survey of pupil opinion' undertaken by W. S. Brown-

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lie would show that children had been successfully taught to regard this behaviour as normal.

Some clear legislation restricting assaults on children is long overdue.

ALAN STANTON

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No Hiding Place

Sir, In his eagerness to be uncharitable about what was, presumably, an impulsive charitable gesture on the part of the Pope, Mervyn Jones (NS 21 October) seems to have left his brains behind. If I had been one of the terrorists, I would have given my right arm for the chance to hold the Pope as a hostage, since no government in the world would have dared to refuse any demand, however outrageous, with the Pope's life at stake. Far from the Pope's offer running no risk of being accepted, we should thank God that the terrorists were too stupid to seize their chance.

I. R. JAROSY

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Degree of Failure

Sir, Margaret Gilmore (NS 21 October) complains that the examination system under which she was given only a Third Class Honours degree may be unfair. Can she really have expected anything better if she writes of someone in Kent University: 'Only one student in the department obtained better results than *him*.'?

MONICA WILSON

Ash
Stedham, Sussex

Teaching for Citizenship

Sir, I am conducting research into the provision for education in citizenship at secondary school level in Britain, and would be interested to hear from any of your readers who have professional experience in this field. Course curricula, specialised teaching material and recommended reading lists would all be welcome and will be acknowledged in any publication.

I hope to use the information for the purpose of extending the provision of systematic education in citizenship. I would be particularly interested to have the views of anyone kind enough to respond to this appeal on the desirability and necessity of compulsory provision.

Regrettably, I only have the services of the researcher who is assisting me with this prospect until mid-December, and I would be grateful, therefore, for an early response to Ms Patricia O'Neil, care of myself, at the House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

NEIL KINNOCK

House of Commons

Cost of the Bar

Sir, In the extract from J. A. G. Griffith's book *The Politics of the Judiciary* (NS 21 October) the author notes that 'in the last three years, the need for a private income during the first years [of a barrister's career] has to an increasing extent returned'.

As far as I know it has always been necessary and, unfortunately, continues to be necessary to have a private source of income during at least the first year following a barrister's call to the bar. I refer to the fact that before barristers are able to practise full time they must spend 12 months in a pupillage. For a greater part of this time they will not earn any income; indeed for half that period they are not allowed to. Yet although they are for all practical purposes students they are not eligible for any kind of grant which would support them during this period of training.

Unless this state of affairs changes it seems unlikely that the dominance of certain privileged groups within the profession, remarked on by Professor Griffith, will change either.

JULIAN WILSON

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Suffering Englishman

Sir, As an avid transatlantic reader of the NEW STATESMAN, I have grown fond of the frequently cheeky style of your book critics. It is a pleasure to turn from the heavy-handed and prolix pieces featured in American publications to the crack or pat across authorial knuckles favoured by your reviewers. However, there is a thin line between treatment that is succinct and treatment that is cavalier, and it seems to me that Jeremy Treglown has crossed it in his summary dismissal of John Fowles's *Daniel Martin.* I do not wish to present a case for the defence, but rather to register my impression that Mr Treglown is suffering from the typically English embarrassment about anything too, er, English.

Fowles's concerns are traditional in origin: in attempting to give a coherent shape to past and present lived experience, he perhaps runs the risk (although in Mr Treglown's view it is not a risk but an unavoided danger) of 'setting out on one of [these] tutorial soliloquies', surely it is a risk at least as worthy as those run by our many contemporary novelists who offer us 'patronising lectures' not on the 19th century or the condition of England, but on the less than mesmerising condition of their newly-hatched psyches.

Certainly Fowles is liable to a slightly laboured moral attitudinising in his attempt to ask Larger Questions, but that attitudinising is unfashionably bracing as often as it is irritating. I think Fowles deserved a less irascible reviewer, one who could entertain the age-old claims of the artist-as-citizen (for so I see Fowles) with as much patience as one suspects he entertains the more chic claims of the artist-as-artist.

DAPHNE MERKIN

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Up to Town

Sir, Mervyn Jones notes the tendency for people from these latitudes to describe the journey to the metropolis as 'going down' (London Diary 21 October). May I explain that we view the passage not merely in terms of topography but also aesthetics?

J. B. WORSNOP

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In Error

Sir, My apologies to the Lord Provost. I was away when Glasgow's long struggle to make sense of this year's District Election result ended in the strange compromise of a Conservative administration and a Conservative deputy chairman but a Labour Lord Provost. I couldn't have deduced Councillor Hodge's party from the election result or his speech in the School of Art, but I should have known all the same.

NEAL ASCHERSON

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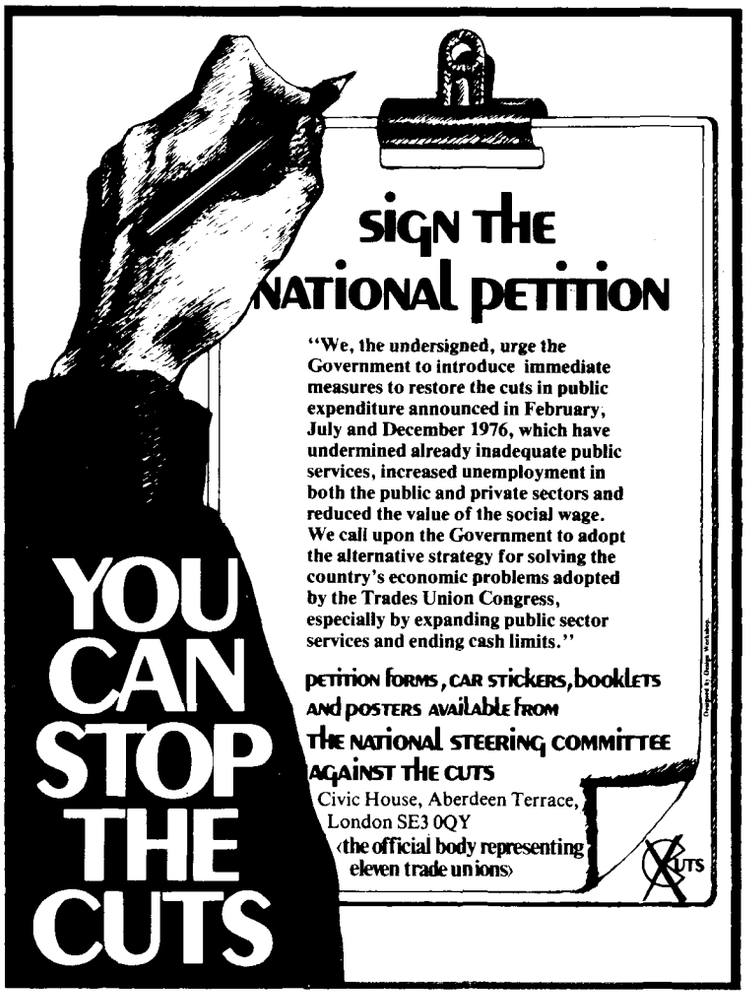

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Nirad C. Chaudhuri

Aboriginal Research

The Wolf Children by CHARLES MACLEAN
Allen Lane £4.95

My acquaintance with wolf children began in 1908 at the age of ten, with *The Jungle Book*. It was one of the English text-books that belonged to my brother, who was only two years older. Although we were young, lived in a small East Bengal town 17 miles from the nearest railway station, had mud floors and mat walls for our houses, and travelled on elephants to visit our relatives in villages to which there were no proper roads, we were expected to tackle Kipling. And we did. The sheer romance of the book kept me spellbound, but I never took the wolf child in it seriously. Nor was the story intended to establish the truth about the legend. Later, I learned by myself that the Mowgli stories were fables about the Englishman in India, and, quite appropriately, they furnished the ritual and the decalogue of the boy scouts.

I also read about the wolf children of Midnapore when the news about them came out in 1926. But I did not believe the story. Indeed, I forgot it wholly. If I had not, I should certainly have discussed it with two persons who I find from Charles Maclean's book were concerned with the affair. One of them was the Raja of Narajole, patron of the Rev. J. Singh (who first discovered the wolf children), and the other the anthropologist Nirmal Bose. I knew both of them very well.

Now comes Mr Maclean's *The Wolf Children*, and I have as much as declared that I am not convinced that the two children were what they were said to be. He has taken immense pains, but his book makes disconcerting, though absorbing, reading. If it demonstrates one thing, it demonstrates how difficult it is in India to prove or disprove anything. From the beginning, the Indian Christian clergyman, J. Singh, who had brought the wolf children to his home, began to prevaricate and even to lie. The two accounts which he himself gave of the capture of the children – in one he said that they had been brought to him by some aboriginals, in the other that he himself was present at the capture – cannot be reconciled. Either of the two might be believed, but that would be a purely personal preference. Nor would I take at face value the corroboration which Mr Maclean obtained from two Santals in 1975 (55 years after the event) of Mr Singh's presence at the capture. I know what highly educated Indians can say with perfect conviction of honesty even about recent events. There are people in Calcutta before whom it is unsafe to say even now that Subhas Chandra Bose is dead.

From her photograph, Kamala, the older girl, seems clearly to be an aboriginal of the area. What is related of the wild behaviour of the two children comes mainly from J. Singh, and I cannot say how much credence may be placed in his statements. But the indisputable facts raise two basic scientific questions. First, a human child, if it is normal by birth, stands erect – by itself, and not from imitation. How was it then that the older child took so long to do it? Secondly, a human child has the faculty of speech inherently, but speaks a particular language from imitation. How was it that Kamala, the older girl, who remained with the Singhs for nine years, supposedly up to the age of 13 or so, never had a wide vocabulary and had only a baby's pronunciation? These would suggest congenital defects. Moreover, how did it come about that the two children, separated by two or three years in age, came to be with the same wolf mother? The possibilities which Mr Maclean suggests are very imaginative. We in India know, of course, that tigers acquire the habit of eating men. But it is hardly credible that tigers, leopards, and wolves in India would get into the habit of abducting human children and rearing them. The question of the reality of wolf children thus remains as open, and as dubious, as ever.

There are other surprising things in Mr Maclean's book. He is not at home in Bengali life or history. I cannot understand how, with so many Bengalis helping him, he could go wrong with the meaning of simple Bengali words and phrases. Who told him that the name Amala, given to the younger girl, meant a 'yellow flower'? It is a perfectly simple Sanskrit and Bengali word which means stainless, i.e. pure. It is a common name in Bengal (one of my sisters-in-law is called Amala). Again, Kamala's exclamation *Ma elo* does not mean 'Mamma, come!' It means 'Mamma has come'. The mood is indicative, not imperative. Again, who gave him the name of the younger daughter of Singh as Buona Lota on the analogy of Buonaparte? Bonolatá (in Sanskrit *Vana-latá*, meaning wild creeper) is a common Bengali name for women. To give one more example, there is no Bengali name 'Puno'; it is Purnachandra, meaning full moon. One of my brothers-in-law had that name, a very common one in Bengal. There are many such mistakes in the book.

Mr Maclean goes further astray in dealing with the nationalist movement. He should not have introduced it in connection with the wolf children, because what attitude the Rev. J. Singh bore to the movement is not relevant to the story. I wonder who told him about Bengali nationalist sentiment, and to justify my wonder I give one example. Mr Maclean writes: 'Ever since Macaulay had publicly slandered the Bengalis by calling them a race of cowards . . . they had taken deep and lasting offence.' A Bengali must have informed him of that, which confirms my opinion that Bengalis of today have forgotten their history before 1947 and only repeat myths. Macaulay denounced the Bengali character not for cowardice but for something else, and the denunciation is to be found in his essay on Warren Hastings, first published in the *Edinburgh Review* in October 1841:

> What horns are to the buffalo, what the paw is to the tiger, what the sting is to the bee, what beauty, according to the old Greek song, is to woman, deceit is to the Bengalee. Large promises, smooth excuses, elaborate tissues of circumstantial falsehood, chicanery, perjury, forgery, are the weapons, offensive and defensive, of the people of the Lower Ganges.

Nationalist propaganda did, of course, make use of this passage, but that any Bengali foamed at the mouth in reading it is pure fiction. I first heard the passage in 1912, when it was read out by my English teacher to the whole class with smiling gusto. We for our part, instead of getting angry, grinned, and wondered with considerable admiration for Macaulay how he had got so close to a certain type of Bengali character.

But Mr Maclean's most serious mistake is to have taken the Rev. J. Singh seriously, made him the real hero of his book, and painted him as if he was a typical figure in the conflict of cultures and political aspirations in India. He writes grandiloquently:

> Like so many educated Indians of his time he had identified too closely with a culture not his own, and with the rebirth of Indian nationalism, betrayed by the Church and the

Kit Wright

Packer's Circuit

Something about this game
eternally fades, to bring
the lost outfielders in,

those whited ruminants
under the layers of green
whom old men at the field-edge

dream, dead name by name,
that played the day with a weeping
willow for ashes, ashes,

till you could believe, by a thin
tide of shadow that washes
play to its close, the ball

swung most sharply in tear-gas,
the rotten grave took spin,
a ghost could make a hundred

with the board of a coffin lid
and Father Time himself
scythe off his balls and sing

for something about this game
eternally fades, to bring
the lost outfielders in.

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Raj, which were busily discarding past shibboleths in order to survive, he found himself trapped and isolated.

The British government in India in the end did betray many persons, communities, and causes, but to include the Rev. J. Singh among them is to forget common sense. This poor half-educated Indian cleric was a typical product of Christian missionary activity in India, especially of the Anglican Church. This Church was part of the military establishment; its political attitudes were those of the government, which made it even more Erastian in India than at home; it was arrogant and narrow. Thus it created a class of converts who were brainwashed and servile. The same process also created its counterproducts, the sulking freaks. The Rev. J. Singh, perhaps born a crank, belonged to the second type. To make him any kind of figure in the cultural scene in India is to reduce that scene to low farce. The man deserves pity, though only for his own lack of intelligence and education. But for him, we should perhaps have had some new light on wolf children.

Peter Conrad

Dirty Linen

A Marriage of True Minds: An Intimate Portrait of Leonard and Virginia Woolf
by GEORGE SPATER and IAN PARSONS *Cape/Hogarth Press* £5.95

'Intimate' here means gossipy: inventories of Virginia Woolf's small-clothes and Leonard's tax-returns, snapshots of the fabled pair playing bowls or smoking cigarettes; never the pretence of intimate critical appraisal of their work, or intimate psychological penetration of their strange, abstinent relationship. The compilers of Bloomsbury memoirs are of course neither critics nor biographers but members of a fan club, and the authors of *A Marriage of True Minds* are deservedly senior in the admiration society. Ian Parsons was a nodding acquaintance of the Woolfs in the 1930s and a neighbour of Leonard's after Virginia's death; George Spater is an American executive who has retired to the indulgence of his scholarly hobby in this country. Their partnership is revealingly apt. Parsons is the older, genteel kind of fan, who was at the same parties as the great 40 years ago; Spater is the newer genus, not born into the club but qualifying for membership by the lavish expenditure of earnings accumulated when in the employ of American Airlines: the blurb writes a reference for him, pointing out that 'before buying their own 15th-century cottage in Sussex, George Spater and his wife lived in Monks House, the former Woolf home at Rodmell'. More and more, the Bloomsbury fad seems to be about real estate rather than literature.

The intimacies confided by Spater and Parsons are also products of suburban snooping and eavesdropping. Quentin Bell, who introduces their volume, commends them for making a 'contribution to knowledge', and for uncovering 'things which are important in themselves'. This is to promote tittle-tattle to scholarship. We all have an appetite for shaming, humanising trivia about the great, since the details of their besmirched domestic linen or unbalanced bank accounts reduce them to equality with us, but we oughtn't to delude ourselves that this combination of idle prurience and levelling envy is dedicated to the extension of human knowledge. The 'things . . . important in themselves' which Spater and Parsons have reclaimed from oblivion fit exactly into this category of democratising gossip. The disclosures about Virginia are scatological, those about Leonard monetary. The angelically intelligent pair turn out to be just as oppressed by physical and financial worries as the rest of us.

The excremental finds of the authors include the information that Virginia menstruated irregularly, and on one occasion went 98 days without an emission; that she kept her undies pinned together with brooches; and that Leonard with truly anal-erotic frugality used printer's proofs for toilet paper. This final item would be a gift to any literary psychoanalyst interested in connecting the writer's pollution of virgin paper with a vengeful expulsion of faeces: Spater and Parsons solemnly report that Raymond Mortimer, obliged to use the Woolf loo, found there 'sheets of Virginia's typescript heavily corrected with her pen', awaiting a second soiling. Alongside Virginia's unsanitary proofs, Leonard's idiosyncratic accounts are investigated: his book-keeping was based on the flow of cash and ignored stock in hand, which led to tax problems. Leonard is also discovered telling a snobbish white lie on his wedding certificate, declaring himself to be of independent means when at the time his wealth consisted largely in winnings from the Calcutta sweepstake.

Beyond this inspection of linen closets and privies, Spater and Parsons are incurious biographers, who when taxed rely on polite discretion: 'What passed between Leonard and Lytton we do not know', or (of Leonard's interview with Virginia's phychiatrist), 'We do not know what was said at this consultation.' There are some valuable pages on Virginia's querulous, competitive, infantile nature and on her exploitation of her hypochondria as a penalty and a privilege of her creativity, but the authors fail to keep the promise of their subtitle and have no new explanation of the marriage. Although they document Leonard's years in the Ceylon Civil Service, mostly by quoting from his autobiography, it doesn't occur to them to wonder whether this experience in the jungle mightn't have been his qualification for coping with Virginia: from dosing buffaloes to rid them of the rinderpest and adjudicating sectarian squabbles between the natives, he graduated to administering Virginia's regressive and unstable temperament, prescribing sedative routines for her and even keeping tables, like an anxious bureaucrat, of variations in her weight and her menstrual cycle.

Critically, Spater and Parsons are equally dozy. Parsons is a publisher, and equates literary achievement with numbers of copies sold: *To the Lighthouse* must be a great novel, though neither he nor Spater knows what it's about, because 'it has been translated into 13 languages, and over half-a-million copies of it have been sold in English language editions alone'. These statistics from the stock-room are decked out with the usual talk about Virginia Woolf's ineffability and rhapsodic meaninglessness. *Mrs Dalloway*, for instance, evaporates as the authors describe it into effete truisms: it

> is devoted to further speculation on the continuing theme, What is life? What is love? Virginia seems to say that life is almost as many things as there are people . . . And love is an unexplainable experience, only to be described in the most tentative terms.

They are likewise willing to admire *To the Lighthouse* without vexing themselves about its significance: 'meaning or no meaning, readers liked *To the Lighthouse* as they have liked other works – *Kubla Khan* or *Tristram Shandy* – whose "meaning" it would be impossible to define'. This sentence exemplifies their inability to discriminate. *Tristram Shandy* is a muddle, *Kubla Khan* a mystery: both expire in a teasing romantic inconclusiveness, whereas *To the Lighthouse* is com-

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posed with a logic of excessive rigidity, reaching a dual completion when Lily Briscoe finishes her painting and Mr Ramsay steps on to the island: it has no room for the inspirational chaos of Sterne or for Coleridge's delirious automatic succession of images. It's a pity that Virginia Woolf's ecstatic and unintelligent fan club continues to give her a bad name.

Russell Davies

Shakes-Peer

Shakespeare by Hilliard by LESLIE HOTSON *Chatto* £6.50

'A Portrait Deciphered' is the subtitle of this book. Actually there are two portraits, identical in subject matter and very similar in treatment. Dr Leslie Hotson now owns the finer of them. It is a very charming little work. A young man with curly hair and a roughish, stubbly red beard is viewed from mid-torso up. He is wearing a black, ruched doublet with fine filigree lace cuffs and collar. His hat, which is tall and has a certain rakishness in the upswept angle of the brim, is decorated with feathers and a broad band set with sparkling studs of some kind. In the version which the V & A has, his eyes are fixed, in a vaguely ruminating gaze, on the horizon somewhere over the viewer's left shoulder. In Dr Hotson's version, the face is more alert altogether: extremely knowing and ironic, in fact, which makes it all the odder that the sitter's right hand, loose and childlike, is clasping, strap-hanger fashion, another hand which droops into the top left corner of the picture from the midst of a perfunctorily suggested bunch of clouds. *'Attici amoris ergo'* reads the inscription, done in gold against the deep blue of the sky; and the date is 1588.

Dr Hotson is author of *I, William Shakespeare*, *Shakespeare's Sonnets Dated*, *Shakespeare's Wooden O* and *Shakespeare's Motley*, among others, so we know where he's going. But his manner of locomotion takes a bit of getting used to. It's a brisk, scoutmasterly galumph, punctuated by admonitory encouragements: 'We must carry on with Superintendent Fabian's more modest watchword, "We have a lot to learn".' And as he galumphs, he shovels the detail back over his shoulder until the reader is wading knee-deep in discarded hypotheses, many of which may overlap with the truth. It is not always easy to distinguish what Dr Hotson is prepared to admit as a tenable but mistaken view from what he is working up to revealing as his own true opinion. But it is always easy to say what he does not believe at all, because he invariably applies a stout boot to it in passing – *viz*: 'To suggest the brown-haired Earl of Essex' – which was the title carried by Hotson's picture in its former home at Castle Howard – 'is of course laughable.' Oh, quite. Elementary, my dear Hotson.

Our sleuth believes, in sum, that the Hilliard represents William Shakespeare as the god Mercury, clasping the hand of the god Apollo, whom Hotson takes to be Will Hatcliffe – the man whom, in another book, he has already strenuously made out to be 'Mr W.H.', and the possible subject of another Hilliard, *A Youth*. Since making out that particular case, Hotson has had his attention drawn to some thorn-twigs in the would-be 'W.H.' picture, which appear to spell out the initial letters in question. Less hard to discover in Hilliard's composition, however, is the pattern along the bottom hem of the youth's doublet, which can be read, without strain, as a monogram superimposing W sideways on top of H. Hotson's laudable determination to see these works with Elizabethan eyes, I suspect, has sometimes prevented him from seeing them with the eyes he's got.

'Attici amoris ergo', meanwhile, is admitted to be a poser. If it's to mean 'for the love of the Greeks', then it's bad Latin (and perhaps it is). But in the opinion of the late Professor Adcock of Cambridge, it could only mean 'Athenians because of love', and nobody can be very happy with that – not even Hotson, whose attempt to identify the Athenians as Mercury and Apollo is much his feeblest connection, and his most exposed. The evidence adduced to show that Shakespeare was often referred to in his own day as a Mercury, in his craft and life, is plethoric (and the hat, I think, is even more mercurial than Hotson makes out), but insisted on in vain. What Hotson succeeds in demonstrating is that there were a lot of uninventive writers about, flattering the famous in drably conventional terms, and that Shakespeare came in for a lot of this. And the more his fame among his peers is insisted upon, by the way, whether as Mercury or no, the more we must wonder why the Hilliards have not come down to us with Shakespeare's name firmly attached to them.

Talking of peers, Hotson is on better ground, perhaps, when he points out that Shakespeare in 1588 was one of Lord Strange's players; and that this particular Lord Strange had deliberately differentiated himself from the rest of his line by turning the family crest – two hands clasped horizontally – on its edge. Why, then, may we not assume that the lily-white hand from the heavens is Lord Strange's? This would certainly throw up a satisfactorily atrocious pun: Shakes-peer. That's what this teeming book seems to need; something rumbustious and *bad* to cement its scholastic subtleties in place; something as crude, if you like, as the existing portraits of Shakespeare – with which this Hilliard, I have to admit, strikes up one or two haunting echoes. If only Shakespeare had had a wall-eye, or Cromwell's warts . . . but then he might have written bitter, forgettable plays, I suppose.

Ian Hamilton

Sin City

The Confessions of Jozef Baisz by DAN JACOBSON *Secker & Warburg* £3.90

Dan Jacobson's early books were much praised for their decency. As a South African, of course, he had plenty to be decent about, but there was more to it than just subject matter. Jacobson proposed the liberal verities with an unusual clarity and confidence. Had he been less shrewd and stylish, there might well have seemed something too contentedly didactic in his moral stance. Indeed, the fear was that when he'd exhausted his South African material, this element of teacher-like correctness would surely be the one to harden. The abstract parable seemed to be lurking in the wings.

In fact, and triumphantly, Jacobson has managed just the opposite. If there is anything that connects his three most recent books, it is that all three call into stern

Christopher Reid

A Whole School of Bourgeois Primitives

Our lawn in stripes, the cat's pyjamas,
rain on a sultry afternoon

and the drenching, mnemonic smell this
brings us
surging out of the heart of the garden:

these are the sacraments and luxuries
we could not do without.

Welcome to our peaceable kingdom,
where baby lies down with the tiger-rug

and bumblebees roll over like puppies
inside foxglove-bells . . .

Here is a sofa, hung by chains
from a gaudy awning.

Two puddles take the sun
in ribbon-patterned canvas chairs.

Our television buzzes like a fancy tie,
before the picture appears –

and jockeys in art-deco caps and blouses
caress their anxious horses,

looking as smart as the jacks on
playing-cards
and as clever as circus monkeys.

Douanier Rousseau had no need to travel
to paint the jungles of his paradise.

One of his tigers, frightened by a
thunder-storm,
waves a tail like a loose dressing-gown cord:

it does not seem to match the coat at all,
but is ringed and might prove dangerous.

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and wily question precisely those humane positions that Jacobson celebrated in book after book throughout the Sixties. Of course, it takes a moralist to get as fascinated as Jacobson now is with sin, but the triumph has been in his far from awe-struck penetration of the sinning state of mind. To know the worst and then, resignedly, to relish it: in such a situation a man of innate worth needs all the resistant ironies that he can muster. Having, though, taken the dread step, Jacobson's step has noticeably lightened; he now performs with the vigour and enjoyment of a released prisoner; all of a sudden he can bring to life people he wouldn't be seen dead as.

In this new novel, the wicked one is Jozef Baisz, a machinating functionary in the government of Jacobson's invented Sarmeda; Baisz works his way up the bureaucratic ladder by a series of treacheries, strokes of luck, bursts of opportunistic inspiration, and so on. In some entirely chilling way, the jobs he gets don't really matter any more than the backs he stabs to get them. Sarmeda is democratic in its totalitarianism in the sense that everybody's life is genuinely just as cheap as everybody else's.

The key art, indeed the only one, is the art of survival; in a place like this, it would quite simply be stupid to go out of your way not to be bad. Thus, Baisz is at ease with his own non-reflective worldliness; his ironies, his wry shrugs, his mumbled regrets issue from a disposition of almost total practicality. If the idea is to stay alive, he seems to say, then how else could I have gone about it . . . ? A good question, and the topical relevance of this species of corruption hardly needs to be explained. Jacobson's achievement is to permit Baisz enough wit, enough engaging roguishness to reassure us that beyond morality there is still life of a sort, and just about worth hanging on to.

The roguishness can't have been easy to bring off without imperilling the really rather sinister notions we are meant to brood on. On his way up to become Moral Guidance Officer in a corrective labour colony, Baisz gets into some knockabout situations that are played wholly, and successfully, for laughs – but Jacobson's taste for the ludicrousness of evil bureaucracies is indulged here with a sure sense of when to stop, and there are a number of moments in the book when the adjustment of balance occurs with fractional correctness, at the very point when picaresque seems to be beckoning too jauntily. Of assistance throughout in this respect is the bleak, spacious landscape of the country itself, a landscape which Baisz responds to with a detailed respectfulness that never begins to enter into his dealings with people; he wants nothing from it and it can neither help nor hinder him; its survival is assured. Time and again, Jacobson dissolves the tawdry eventfulness of the human drama into the contemplation of this blurred, limitless waste land: the apotheosis of indifference.

As a means of humanising Baisz, the bouts of nature study are rather more compelling than the Judas-impulse that he himself advances as the chief spur to his low deeds; because it is so explicitly spelled out that Baisz can only love what he betrays, we feel suspicious. Perhaps we are meant to mistrust (and I'd rather that we were) any mitigating self-analysis that a character like this might tag on to his 'confessions', or perhaps in the end Jacobson couldn't resist making Baisz a bit more thoughtful than he has any reasonable right to be.

Either way, Baisz is a fictional creation we are going to have to go back to more than once, and Sarmeda will have to be visited again. This is a rich and subtle book and – just in case, in pondering its subtlety, I haven't made this clear – immensely entertaining.

David Caute

Worry, Boredom and Hysteria

France, 1848-1945, Vol. II: Intellect, Taste and Anxiety by THEODORE ZELDIN *Oxford* £15

When it appeared four years ago, Theodore Zeldin's *Ambition, Love and Politics* was widely recognised as a work of great originality, brilliance and profundity. Richard Cobb (subsequently famous for his homicidal attack on Mary Wollstonecraft, and known in the trade as the Butcher of Balliol) hailed Zeldin's achievement as 'immensely impressive', while Donald MacRae, writing in this journal, declared: 'This is, quite simply, the most enjoyable book of its kind in nearly 40 years. When it is complete it may be even more than that, a kind of classic . . .'

Well, now it is complete: a further 1,202 pages to rub shoulders with the original 823 (Zeldin, with cool sadism, even hints at a further volume of bibliography). Your present reviewer, casting a *coup d'oeil* at the dustjacket during a momentary lapse in concentration, noticed that he too had voiced glowing enthusiasm for Volume I: 'Clearly Dr Zeldin is halfway to producing a masterly work as elegant and humane as it is scholarly' – we really ought, like the venal hacks of Balzac's *Lost Illusions*, to demand payment for such instant quotes.

Is *France, 1848-1945*, judged in its totality, a classic, or even 'a kind of classic'? The floor round my desk is littered with tortured attempts to answer this question. Zeldin's approach to history appears to be so original, like a scholarly equivalent of *A la recherche du temps perdu*, so brazenly iconoclastic in its disregard for the conventional conceptual divisions (politics, economics, social life, culture, sport and leisure, etc.), so bold in its realignment of intellect and emotion, that one is liable to overlook the flagrantly conventional structure of the whole work: *France, 1848-1945*. Now the question arises – this is germane to the problem of reading the whole book – whether any single historian can write perceptively about every aspect of life in a nation state.

One may wonder, indeed, whether the history of a single nation state is not now a redundant pursuit, imposing a framework simultaneously too large and too small on the thematic categories which cut across it and which provide a historian with his principle of order and understanding. If we are interested in 19th-century education, ambition, careerism, birth, death, marriage, sex, feminism, health, industrial life, literary taste, medicine, sport, religion, neuroticism or theatre, does not the single nation state emerge as an arbitrary unit for discussion? Only in the realm of domestic politics does it make strict sense. This is not to deny, of course, the interest or importance of particular national traits, notably those associated with *langue* and *langage*; but it does suggest to me that Dr Zeldin has been driven into areas of obligation (covering the ground) which are not, strictly, his forte.

Take, for example, his chapter on 'Good and Bad Taste', which humbler, run-of-the-mill historians would have called 'Literature and the Reading Public' (just as they would have ploddingly substituted the title 'Communism, Fascism and the Intellectuals' for the chapter he calls 'Hypocrisy'). The chapter begins with a strenuous flexing of conceptual muscles. Littré had remarked that everybody possesses taste, yet taste is different in everybody, a 'puzzle' that leads Zeldin to reflect that history must

> study more carefully the relationship between the patterns and the chaos, between the universal and the particular. Taste is a notion whose ambiguity makes it particularly suitable for this.

For what? Whenever Zeldin is out of his element, his linking sentences, tortuously imprecise, give him away. Or consider the following: 'What one must seek therefore is a way of understanding the incoherence and confusion of taste, which does not falsely diminish that confusion.' Or ponder the next two sentences in juxtaposition: (a) 'History is a sieve that picks up only a smaller portion of the debris of the past'; (b) 'The first need is to look at all the books that were published, irrespective of the merits that have been attributed to them.'

This threat would certainly arouse Worry, Boredom and Hysteria, were not that the

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title of Chapter 17, whereas we are still in Chapter 8. But what follows is merely a table of publication statistics, destined to be followed by facts and figures of every kind: how the French published fewer books than the British, how book prices compared and altered in the two countries, how many bookstalls Hachette had established at railway stations by 1882, how French library loan figures contrasted with American and British ones, and how even today Frenchmen spend more on smoking than reading.

What has this to do with taste, or with the ponderous conceptual exercises that launched the chapter? Very little. Chunks of information, extremely interesting in isolation, are threaded together by generalisations of shattering banality: 'a wide variety of books' have been popular; 'Why some books were more successful than others was to a certain extent a mystery'; 'Why people had the tastes they preferred was therefore no simple matter'; 'It is uncertain exactly how authors influenced their public'; 'Taste, good and bad, seems to be the work of time'.

A large proportion of *Intellect, Taste and Anxiety* deals with ideas of one kind or another. But Zeldin's great affinity is not for ideas as such but for the people who serve as their vehicles and proponents, whether provincial primary-school teachers, professors, doctors, journalists, scientists or cranks. Clearly one of the most gifted and resourceful social historians of our time, with an unerring eye for the salient anecdote and a fine gift for retelling it, Zeldin would have provided us with an unforgettably vivid portrait of the texture of French life, its mood, style, smells, colours and appetites, if he had only had the strength to whittle down his narrative to sparser proportions. As for ideas, his pen somehow renders them dull, lifeless. In this respect Zeldin and George Steiner stand at polar extremes; for whereas Steiner is liable to burn up an idea by raising its oxygen supply to giddy proportions, under Zeldin's attention an idea may die like a flame in an airless room.

So perhaps it isn't a classic, whatever that may mean. The form of the book, despite the provocative chapter headings ('Science and Comfort', 'Gerontocracy', 'Conformity and Superstition', 'Education and Hope') provides no real centre of gravity – the effect is encyclopedic, archival, recurringly brilliant, sometimes eccentric. Dr Zeldin has dug deeper and wider than his peers; as yet the portrait hasn't quite emerged from the clay. But does the fault lie with the author or his chosen subject?

How does Zeldin himself summarise his achievement?

> I have not followed the politicians in thinking that history can be summarised in a series of reforms, for people's lives were not as fundamentally altered by institutional and legislative changes as the politicians believed or hoped they could be . . . I have used as my point of departure the individual and the attitudes with which he faces the world . . . The book thus starts, as a first step, by reducing history into a kind of *pointillisme* . . . This serves the purpose of disengaging the facts from what holds them together and making one conscious of the independent existence of interpretations placed on facts . . . I have been hesitant about claiming to see causal relationships, which historians tend to imagine too freely . . . I prefer juxtaposition, so that the reader can make what links he thinks fit.

Zeldin certainly deserves the last word.

Jonathan Keates

On the Romp

Trelawny, the Incurable Romancer by WILLIAM ST CLAIR *Murray* £7.50

He was, of course, the friend of Shelley and the man who went to Greece with Byron. He was also the author of the best book about them both. Worthy and precise as most of their subsequent biographers have been, none has achieved, by attempting to establish realities, what Trelawny succeeded in putting together from a handful of memories and an unrivalled talent for lying. Indeed, the sheer quality of *Recollections of Shelley, Byron and the Author,* zestful, sensational and mocking, calls into question the whole purpose of literary memoirs. It was a stroke of genius, for instance, to begin a book on Shelley with a description of a chance meeting with Wordsworth, and we would surely rather have Trelawny's matchless account of the fateful storm in the bay of Lerici or the De Quinceyesque verve of his sketch of the Greek battlefield than the most painstakingly researched documentations of either.

At their best, the *Recollections* represent the triumph of verisimilitude over truth. At their worst, they are simply what we should have expected from their author. Born the younger son of a younger son in a family of Cornish squires, he was sent into the navy at 12, missing Trafalgar by a whisker and going, mutinous and moping, through seven years as a midshipman. Thence, via a disastrous first marriage, to Switzerland, Pisa, the Shelleys, and an existence which thereafter he would always take care to make appear at least twice its natural size.

The romancing, the yarns of piracy, rape and torture in the East Indies, later to provide material for his fervid, hysterical quasi-autobiography *Adventures of a Younger Son*, a sort of Gothick *Lord Jim*, the tales of eating human flesh among the Arabian Wahabees: these were not all his fault. The present book gives a useful Romantic perspective in emphasising how much the Byron-Shelley circle needed its Trelawny. In certain respects he recalls his contemporary, Napoleon: both were magnificently successful impostors, realising, for a season, their wildest fantasies, and both fulfilled the hankerings of an age increasingly discomfited by its own cosiness and eager for anything to give it a twitch. Shelley naïvely called him 'a wild but kind-hearted seaman', Mary Shelley found his company 'delightful for he excites me to think', and cynical Byron added him to an entourage consisting mainly of tame animals.

Following Shelley's death, for which he seems to have been indirectly responsible in his enthusiasm for easily capsizable, shallow-drafted boats, he was off with Byron to Greece. The poet, fretting over the availability of food, horses and women ('grub for horses cheap – maidenheads as plentiful as blackberries', answered Trelawny) was never less than the English milord. His fellow corsair, more adaptable, donned Albanian dress, ate cross-legged and cracked his body lice with his fingernails. After Missolonghi, he joined the Greek warlord Androutsos in his cave, reading Scott and playing billiards between forays, and surviving, with epic courage, a murder attempt by a fellow adventurer named Fenton. Thence home to a spell as a drawing-room monster in a world which kept its Balkan paraphernalia of *klephts, yataghans* and *pallikars* firmly between watered silk album covers, a stab at politics, a lunge at Lord Melbourne's mistress, and an old age of sublime twaddling as the grizzled seadog in Millais's ambiguously-titled *The North West Passage.*

The Philhellene romp has already figured in the vigorously readable *That Greece Might Still Be Free* by William St Clair, whose unerring grasp of period detail spills over splendidly into his latest book. A. L. Rowse rather surprisingly having kept silent, this is the first full-length life of the old Cornish charlatan to appear, a consummately satisfying mixture of amused detachment, sympathy towards Trelawny's world of tall stories, and unobtrusively disclosed vistas of research. 'Trelawny', Byron once remarked, 'would be a good fellow if he could spell and speak the truth.' St Clair, a scholarly, urbane and intelligent biographer, can apparently do both very well.

Alan Ryan

The Wringer

My LSE edited by Joan Abse *Robson Books* £5.25

When Henry Hutchinson, a Fabian magistrates' clerk from Derby, shot himself in 1894, he left £10,000 to Sidney Webb, to assist the Fabian Society in spreading socialist propaganda. This legacy formed the basis of the funds on which the LSE was started. The curious blend of grottiness, earnestness and a sort of minimal glamour which thus marked its beginnings seems entirely appropriate to its subsequent history; though what the Fabians, let alone poor old Hutchinson, would make of its present condition, God knows. The allegiances of most of the place's economists and political scientists would hardly give him much joy, nor those of the present philosophy department.

The contributors to *My LSE* aren't altogether sure what to make of it either. Some of them are unequivocal in their loyalties: the Indian High Commissioner, B. K. Nehru, was there in the early Thirties, when the LSE was in a particularly flourishing state, and has happy memories of the young and handsome Lionel Robbins wow-

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ing the ladies with his flowing locks; Aubrey Jones, there at the same time, gives a very fetching account of his own transformation from a timid Welsh schoolboy into the possessor of the best First in economics for several years. Chaim Bermant, however, opens his brief memoir with the simple statement: 'I hated the place.' It's not as though he wasn't used to urban grimness, after an undergraduate career in Glasgow; what he wasn't used to was surly porters ('a People's Republic style of bloody-minded officiousness'), footling rules ('I once wrote a letter on LSE notepaper to the *Manchester Guardian*, and two days later came a reprimand from the director, Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders') and the failure of the place to feel like an academic institution ('no confluence of disciplines, no catholicism of interests . . . one felt that if it was put through a wringer not a drop of juice would emerge'). He admits that most of his fellow graduates were happy enough, especially the Americans who thought the squalid premises in Houghton Street were 'compact', 'intimate' and 'life-size'.

But Bernard Crick reckons that 'like the ocean liners, the cinemas, the cavalry and the Kibbutzim, it has had its finest days'. The pleasures of the LSE aren't pleasures of the LSE, but rather those of London; what it needs now is not to expand and take over the leadership of British social science but to live modestly and accept the competition of the rest of the University of London. And Colin Crouch's splendid analysis of the student politics of the late Sixties ends with the melancholy admission that the political mania which possesses too many of the inhabitants leaves no room for gentler human interests. 'Whenever the choir and orchestra send the strains of, say, the Mozart Requiem down through those endless gaunt corridors and staircases, I feel part of a group of trespassers . . .'

Even Norman Mackenzie – who, I've always assumed, simply walked round the corner to begin work on the NS – seems to have enjoyed not the LSE so much as student life in wartime Cambridge, whither the LSE was evacuated. But if he didn't breathe the air of Houghton Street in the most literal sense, he got it, even in Cambridge, from the lectures of H. J. Laski, whose 'combination of personal teaching and public preaching was peculiarly suited to the mood of wartime'. Still, they tell some good stories, which suggests that cheerfulness did keep breaking through the usual anxieties of late adolescence and academic life. John Watkins recalls the occasion when Bernard Levin contrived to get a (real, rather than a philosopher's) straw man elected to the Student Union Council. It only needed Levin to stand in for him at the candidates' meeting, on the pretext that he had 'flu, for the block vote of the Labour students to carry him in. One begins to see that Levin's enthusiasm for the stage and his dislike of Labour politics are more closely connected than you'd think. But Robert Mackenzie trumps the lot: noticing that nobody seems to have talked about sex, whereas the contributors to *My Oxford* and *My Cambridge* wrote about little else, he says that he can recall only one conversation about sex from his student days. An Australian had vowed not to return home to his ranch in the outback, 'until he had experimented with every sexual activity known to man'. His experience up to that point had been limited to 'laying his girl cousin and a little bestiality'. Mackenzie and friends happily helped to compile the list of vices to be sampled, omitting coprophilia and necrophilia purely on aesthetic grounds. The Australian took the list, and dared its compilers to accompany him into Soho to see how far down the list they could get. The story ends as all such stories do – Professor Mackenzie now remembers leaving for the fray, 'but I can't for the life of me remember how the evening ended'. Still, it lends a certain relish to our wait for *My Wollongong Reform School*, which must surely be next in the series.

Derek Mahon

Watt?

Scenes from a Receding Past by AIDAN HIGGINS *John Calder* £4.95
Amateurs by DONALD BARTHELME *Routledge* £3.95

Dan Ruttle, the son of a vet, grows up in the Sligo countryside, attends a boarding school run by a religious order, masturbates conscientiously, goes to England where he takes humble factory jobs, meets and marries a New Zealand girl, and goes off with her to Greece. So much for the story line. Now consider this:

> His father looked at him through a glass; he had a hairy face . . . His mother put on the oilsheet. That had the queer smell. His mother had a nicer smell than his father . . . When they were grown up he was going to marry Eileen.

Joyce, of course, in *A Portrait of the Artist*. And here is Aidan Higgins in *Scenes from a Receding Past*:

> My father holds back his head and laughs. He smells of hairgrease, linseed oil, his quiff is parted in the middle . . . Lizzie Bolger puts on face powder and red lipstick and kisses me on the cheek. She has a funny smell. . . . My mother always has a nice smell.

Later he writes, 'Dan Ruttle, Nullamore, Sligo, Ireland', although forgoing 'Europe, The World, The Universe'. You would think that anyone setting out to write an autobiographical novel (especially one set in Ireland) would take care to avoid anything remotely reminiscent of the *Portrait*; yet here is Higgins, one of the most interesting writers around, making one of the oldest mistakes in the book, deluding himself that to write *like* an admired predecessor is to write as well and as *originally* as that predecessor. He does it again later, reproducing a school prospectus in its entirety and listing 165 possible names for an imagined daughter in such a way that one is reminded of Beckett's compulsive listings in *Murphy* and *Watt*.

This bare-faced imitativeness is just one symptom of the general debility and inconsequence which characterise *Scenes from a Receding Past*. Richard Brautigan is quoted in an epigraph: 'I've been examining half scraps of my childhood. They are pieces of distant life which have no form or meaning. They are things that just happened like lint.' And the phrases 'half scraps' and 'no form or meaning' seem to have provided Higgins with an excuse for presenting a series of unrelated epiphanies as a work of art. In another epigraph he quotes Yves Berger: 'The pictures of the will are not to be compared with those of the dream, of the drifting brain. The former have neither the solidity nor the beauty of the others.' No doubt there is truth in this, but while drifting brains may and do conceive works of art, some exercise of the will is needed to bring them to fruition. That Higgins is an artist no one who has read *Langrishe Go Down* and *Balcony of Europe* will deny; but *Scenes* lacks the stylistic brilliance of either. Higgins fans (among whom I count myself) will find felicities to admire, like young Dan's account of following the solitary W. B. Yeats into a Dublin cinema and observing his reactions ('I cannot see! I cannot see!'). Meanwhile, I look forward to something less pretentious. The trouble with Higgins, as with all writers of his rare and often rewarding type, is that he narrowly missed his vocation; for he is not really a novelist at all. He is a poet in prose, and suffers in his work all the formal frustrations peculiar to that condition.

Donald Barthelme, that whimsical absurdist, looks out at us from the dust jacket of *Amateurs*, a collection of 20 stories, with a pedantic, tight-lipped expression which might at any moment dissolve into wild laughter. In a typical tale, 'Some of Us Had Been Threatening Our Friend Colby', a group of friends decide to hang Colby because he has 'gone too far'. Colby himself demurs, but after some hesitation falls in with the idea and takes part in group discussions. There is the music to be decided on (Colby's request for Ives's Fourth Symphony is seen as a 'delaying tactic'), and the design and construction of a gibbet. There are arrangements to be made for the transport and refreshment of spectators, and a hangman to be found. (Since this last problem proves insuperable, Colby agrees to jump off a big rubber ball which should then roll away.) In the event, all goes off smoothly, and nobody ever goes too far again. Have the frontiers of consciousness been extended by this sort of thing? Hardly. Have we been entertained? A little, perhaps, but not to the point of wild laughter. More like a watery smile.

Among this week's contributors:

NIRAD C. CHAUDHURI's books include *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, *Continent of Circe* and a biography of Max Müller.

JOHN CAREY's most recent book is *Thackeray: Prodigal Genius*.

DAVID CAUTE's *The Great Fear*, a study of American domestic anti-communism in the post-war years, is to be published next year.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

John Carey

Paper Tigers

The only periodical I have ever read from cover to cover over a considerable period, and venerated even to the extent of making artistic water-colour copies of its more striking illustrations, was called *The Wide World Magazine*. My father subscribed to it when I was 11 or 12 years old. Published by George Newnes Ltd, it appeared monthly, and everything in it was true. A stern note to contributors on the first page advised them that they should submit their adventures (accompanied by a stamped-addressed envelope) only if they were absolutely authentic in every detail. The first page also carried a greyish sketch of the globe (designated 'The Unique "Wide World" Contents Map'), which had labelled arrows stuck into different bits of it, so that the reader could see at a glance what far-flung spots the month's narratives issued from.

The range was unfailingly impressive. In the tundra, in the outback, in the Malaysian jungles, along the North-West frontier – wherever, indeed, a straight left could be thrown or a machete wielded – the *Wide World's* contributors were to be found. They slipped down ravines and precipitated themselves from speeding trains. They were overwhelmed by avalanches and tossed by typhoons. They bounded through forest-fires dressed as Canadian Mounted Police; they donned divers' helmets and grappled with octopuses. Their destruction of wild life was prodigious. Wolves, sea-lions, elephants, polar bears, elks, emus, giant tortoises, and the whole tribe of greater and lesser cats, were subdued, month after month, with implements ranging from the lariat to the machine-gun.

At the time of my acquaintance with the magazine, the second world war happened to be on, so a sprinkling of Huns and Japs mingled with the more traditional quarry. But they never, as I recollect, counted for much among all the fur and feather. Then there were the natives – a staple ingredient – big black fellows and wily little ones; turbaned, grass-skirted, or carrying luggage on their heads. Their discomfiture when they were rumbled in some petty crime, or found themselves face to face with a man-eater on a jungle track, yielded endless laughs; and when they gathered in bands and turned nasty, as they often did, they supplied the resident *Wide World* contributor with an invaluable occasion for coolness and bloodshed. They had, too, their mystic streak. A regular feature in the magazine, entitled 'The Queer Side of Things', comprised accounts of voodoo, witch-doctoring, fatal curses and suchlike foreign devilry, generally culminating in reflections by the narrator upon life's inscrutability.

Each story had about half-a-dozen monochrome pictures, with captions drawn from the tale itself. These portrayed the narrative highspots ('I whipped my right to his jaw with every ounce of strength I possessed', or, more simply, 'I shot him in the chest'). Alternatively they afforded a view of the local population ('Dancing savages were silhouetted against the flames'), or of the fauna ('I saw two enormous crocodiles biting at the pontoon bridge'). But the pictorial glory of the magazine was its front cover, shiny, polychrome, and different each month. There enraged whales splintered open boats; assegai and pith helmet clashed with claw and fang; and landslides slid. Inside the cover it was intimated that the originals of all the drawings on show were for sale, and that terms might be had on application to 'the Cliché Department, George Newnes Ltd'. I suppose it was manly frankness that made them choose that address.

The advertisement pages reflected the *Wide World*'s masculine bias, and provided an enthralling literary experience on their own account. Apart from standard items like shaving-sticks, self-stropping razors, and braces ('Sartorial Suspension a Surety'), there were countless expedients for acquiring soundness in wind and limb, such as the Litesome Supporter Belt, which guaranteed 'Commando Fitness' to those it encircled, or, for the academically inclined, the Institute of Breathing Postal Course ('One of our most famous Generals writes: "Your rhythmical breathing revives one physically in the most amazing way" '). Wartime had given literacy a boost, and the adverts invited you to send up for a multiplicity of practical manuals which would renovate your system completely, from the memory to the bladder. I particularly coveted *Constipation and Our Civilization*, but the outlay (5/6d) was prohibitive. As a sort of adjunct to the adverts a column called 'Man and His Needs', written by 'The Captain', gave helpful chats on fishing tackle and other male necessaries ('Devotees of the briar are continually complaining to me about the scarcity and cost of decent pipes . . .'). To the 12-year-old reader, it seemed the very stuff of adulthood. A correspondingly cordial note was struck by a section called 'The "Wide World" Brotherhood', which offered greetings from Wide Worlders beyond the seas, and a metal badge, obtainable by post.

In the interests of research I recently had some files of the magazine dredged up from the Bodleian stack, and was engulfed, the moment they arrived, in floods of nostalgia. They had been clamped between fat, rhubarb-coloured boards, and the pictorial covers, ripped off, were stuffed together at the back. It was like finding a piece of one's childhood pinned out in a museum. The *Wide World's* first number, I discovered, appeared in April 1898. Its onslaught on the animal kingdom had commenced straightaway with 'The Romance of Seal Hunting' (by Sir George Baden-Powell) and 'A Battle Royal with a Tiger: A True Story'. The publishers promised 'weird adventures' and 'amazing photos', explaining that the supply was 'practically inexhaustible, thanks to the far-reaching arrangements we have made in both civilised and uncivilised countries'. Presumably one was meant to imagine that they had agents at work fixing up natural disasters for years in advance.

The magazine finally packed up in December 1965 – bizarre, really, to think that it hobbled on into the swinging Sixties at all. It must have looked odd on station bookstalls among the nudes, though as its jacket always bore the legend 'The Magazine for Men' I suppose its flagging circulation may have benefited occasionally from the mistakes of baffled porn hunters. The final number carried a pious editorial about the understanding the *Wide World* had fostered among peoples: 'to many youngsters in villages in the heart of Africa it has been an education.' Maybe: but in the days I knew it African youngsters would have met with a decidedly undignified view of themselves in its pages. No doubt I wasted time on it when my more precocious contemporaries were already pegging away at Proust and Dostoevsky. But I can't say I regret it. Proust and Dostoevsky could wait, and they are, anyway, short on tigers. Besides, the *Wide World* taught me that the world was wide, heroic, infinitely diverse, teeming with inexhaustible life, and ruled by the British. I must have been one of the last children lucky enough to have believed any of that.

Radio

Eric Korn

Sunday Vapours

It is easy to forget that the BBC is only partly responsible for the state of the universe. It may therefore be a cosmic – not an administrative or artistic – fault that funny stuff is hard to find these days. *Radio B.U.R.P.S.*, *Chronicles of the Soppy Family* and *The Jason Explanation*, have all gone their waggish way, and the loss to the gaiety of nations is minimal. *A King Shall Have a Kingdom* (Radio 4), a Viking pageant in which Angela Rippon and Flora Robson had somehow been induced to take part (their way of paying beneficent danegeld to the York Archaeological Trust) featured sniggered-up renditions of Alcuin and Bede, and Sellars-and-Yeatman jokes: 'not *that* Ethelred, we're not ready for him yet.' Somebody said 'hee hee', a sound I have never heard articulated. Things are worse at LBC, where on Satur-

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day nights Sarah from Sydenham ('It's a Jewish story but let me say I'm Jewish') and Dave from Peckham phone in with terrible oldies and dire newies – but congratulations to the LBC newsreader who managed to say 'he recognised Stoll and Klar in the stolen car' without an audible blench.

The humorous interludes are the worst part of *Not now, I'm listening* (Radio 4), an agreeably laid-back Sunday-supplement miscellany, with contributions last week from Frederic Raphael, Roy Fuller and a saurian musical instrument called a baryton, and a welcome absence of and-it's-goodbye-from-him vapouring. It makes a decent accompaniment to whatever you may be doing at noon on Sundays, a useful coolant if you have just reorganised your financial life on the recommendations, usually jargon-free and specific, of *Money Box*, which precedes it. Of the other new Sunday programmes on Radio 4, *International Assignment* is too short and too early, *Forget Tomorrow's Monday* rather too Woman's Hour/Womens' Institute, and *Local Time*, a posy of provincial blossoms, sure-fire if you like anthologies. And I do; if it weren't for *Pick of the Week* I should have missed the sermon on constipation ('Help us, O Lord to give up freely what we no longer need' – I don't think it was tongue-in-cheek). Altogether, 'the new Sunday' (the BBC sometimes forgets it's only partly responsible for the universe, too) is on the way to achieving the quality of relaxed unexpectedness that Alistair MacIntyre has aimed at.

Relaxation can go too far, as the bowel-homilist would no doubt agree; a soupçon of urgency would help *The Unimportance of Being Right*, an investigation of governmental inanity by economist David Henderson which has just started on Radio 3 (Mondays, 8.20 pm). Professor Henderson has a slight resemblance to the mills of god, and the matter of his first talk could be distilled to about two propositions, one of these being the impressive claim that the AGR and Concorde projects are 'two of the three worst civil investment decisions in the history of mankind to date'. (The third is the Soviet SST; the pyramid of Cheops is excluded as not intended to show a profit in this world.) The difficulty he has had in documenting this conclusion, despite all the glib talk of accountability and openness, is his other important proposition. But the documentation should follow in later programmes and should not be missed.

Fun or funniness may be scarce but wit abounds: crabbed youth and age met crabwise in Peter Tegel's *Rocklife* (*Drama Now*, Radio 3), pointedly directed by Richard Wortley. Steve Hodson was penetrating as young Alex, come to disturb the Aegean retirement of two shrewd self-absorbed oldsters (Stephen Murray and Pauline Letts) with a rucksack full of Porterish postures, the *I Ching*, *The Divided Self*, *The Midnight Kitchen* and a biscuit-tin containing the ashes of the old boy's life-long love. No withers were unwrung. Less mordant was Mikhail Bulgakov's *Black Snow* (Radio 3), a gentle, dreamy send-up of Stanislavsky and circumambient frauds and pseuds in the brief post-revolutionary spring. They couldn't approach the splendid fraudulence of Sir Edmund Backhouse (*A Hidden Life*, Radio 4), who forged, imagined, or otherwise manufactured oriental manuscripts, lucrative orders with himself as middleman, an affair with Oscar Wilde, and even much of the Chinese Navy. Who builds his house (Backhouse, Stonehouse, Whitehouse) on the credulity of others, builds on rock.

Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

Mars Boy

Coriolanus *Stratford*
Rosmersholm *Haymarket*
The Lady from Maxim's *Lyttleton*

When Shakespeare puts 'speak, speak' or 'resolved, resolved' into the mouths of 'all', as he does at the beginning of *Coriolanus*, we're accustomed to hearing one or two of that 'all' shout the key-words while the rest burble away behind them. We don't expect the whole gathering to snap out such lines in crisp unison, like a well-drilled chorus at a Nazi rally; and yet that's precisely the way Terry Hands launches into what proves, logically enough, to be a very stark and stylised production. The stage is black, and bare to the sides, which are lined with what look like vast slanting coffins, themselves sporadically cranked round to resemble the gates of Corioli or Rome. It is not a place for subtle effects nor, indeed, for the sort of nimble acting which the RSC has long made its speciality, slyly tickling inferences and ironies from words like trout from a stream. It is more like a great impersonal cemetery in which, as it sometimes seemed to me, the body of the play itself lies stiff and lifeless. I've often admired Mr Hands's work when others have flinched from its boldness; and now here I am, a spoil-sport at the party, resisting the general acclamation. Some people are never satisfied.

All the same, much of the evening struck me as coarse and colourless, in spite and perhaps sometimes because of Maxine Audley's rasping Volumnia, Julian Glover's nose-in-air Aufidius, and Graham Crowden's fey, capering Menenius, a White Queen with a yellow-foam beard. Only Alan Howard seems to have pondered particularly long and hard over his part, which is just as well, since it's the main one. To him, Coriolanus is marooned in the heroic myths with which his vulture-mum must endlessly have regaled him in the cot. He's Peter Pan in a leather cuirass, a giddy, shining romantic infinitely less interested in promotion to high office than in chivalric adventures with the local Hook. Contact with an earthier world, in the form of importunate proles in greasy aprons, doesn't just repel him: the very prospect puts him into the kind of bewildered panic many of us must remember having felt as children. Something disagreeably grown-up is being asked of us, and we can't cope. It seems to me a perfectly proper interpretation of the overblown mother's boy, provided it's reconciled with a formidable and warlike exterior, as on the whole it is. What worries me more is Mr Howard's verbal embroidery: his growing tendency to transform a simple 'now Mars' into a quavering 'naaah Maaas' or to add a gasping coda to emphatic words – 'mind-ah', 'spleen-ah', 'false hound-aah'. The production does, it's true, lack richness: this isn't the way to provide it.

Those 'tribunes of the people', so clamorous in *Coriolanus*, reappear in *Rosemersholm*, though by now the name has become a sarcastic sneer directed by the malevolent Right against the unscrupulous Left. Both factions, needless to say, want to nail the hero's scalp on their particular wall, and both are frustrated by the last-reel suicide that Ibsen presents as part-triumph, part-defeat, part-mystery, part-muddle. It is a disconcertingly elaborate piece, more so than anything in the canon preceding it. Once again we have, as Ibsen himself put it, 'the struggle that every serious-minded man must have with himself to bring his way of life into harmony with his convictions'. But this time individual integrity isn't cramped and oppressed only by external factors: grasping pressure-groups, social prejudice, family tradition, moral convention, the sort of strictures on display in *Enemy of the People*, *A Doll's House* and *Ghosts*. The conflict has shifted to the cockpit where it is to remain throughout the later plays, right inside the main character's skull. What finally polish off poor, puzzled Rosmer are the enemies within: guilt, remorse, loss of innocence and loss of faith.

This sounds, I suppose, numbingly abstract and portentous; and that's how many have regarded the play since it was first dismissed as a 'study in insanity best fitted for the lecture-room in Bedlam', back in 1891. Let it be added, then, that it's also a detective story, two-odd hours spent stealthily stalking the answer to a specific question: why did Rosmer's wife anticipate his own self-slaughter? Was she, or wasn't she, lured into the mill-stream by a jealous companion, anxious to replace her in her husband's affections? Should the spiritual debate begin to flag, these life-and-death matters are always there to seize the attention; and seize it they certainly do at the Haymarket, thanks to the quiet, measured excitement of Clifford Williams's production. Claire Bloom's lady-predator, anachronistically named Rebecca West, suffers perhaps a bit too much from emotional chilblains: hard to imagine her ever having been secretly 'overcome by passion and desire', as she claims. But Daniel Massey's gentle, melancholy, malleable Rosmer is unerringly right. Altogether, it is a captivating evening.

So, maybe, is the latest Feydeau to have been efficiently anglicised by John Mortimer and competently enough crammed on to the National stage: provided (of course) you enjoy his mechanical, dehumanised style of farce, his tendency to see people as gaping orifices, baldly craving sex, money, status, and the esteem of their peers. *The Lady from Maxim's*, more than most, made me feel I was at the circus: all those lurid

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creatures on the high-wire, prancing, somersaulting, and somehow managing to avoid crashing to their social or marital doom. Will Dr Petypon (Stephen Moore) persuade his crotchety uncle (Michael Bryant) that he's married to the sexy piece (Morag Hood) who insists on bawling ''ow's yer father?' and brandishing her frilly knickers? Can he simultaneously convince the 'old boiler', his wife, that the girl's his aunt? All this and more, much more – yet usually provoking astonishment rather than laughter, a commodity surely at its most satisfying when it derives from the quiddities of character, not the contortions of marionettes. Personal bias, no doubt; but I would recommend anyone seeking amusement at the National to try Ayckbourn and *Bedroom Farce* rather than this gleeful display of barren bravura.

Art

John Spurling

Science Fictions

The Modern Spirit and **Matta** *Hayward Gallery; until 20 November*
Michael Leonard *Fischer Fine Art; until 11 November*

The gulf between art and art-history is well illustrated by *The Modern Spirit*. Read William Innes Homer's useful history *Alfred Stieglitz and the American Avant-Garde* (Secker & Warburg £9.75) and you will thrill to the fervour with which young American artists in the first decade of the century scurried to Paris to learn from the Steins, Rodin, Matisse, Picasso *et al*, hurrying home to New York again to lay their discoveries at the feet of Stieglitz, the first American apostle of modern art. Milton Brown's catalogue to the Hayward exhibition purveys an equal sense of new frontiers and derring-do. But examine the works themselves and you will find your spirits distinctly subdued.

This is not to suggest that either of the Professors is wrong or that the pioneers of modern art in America were not important to their successors (early work by Arshile Gorky and De Kooning is included in the last section of this show), who became to our period what Matisse and Picasso were to that earlier one. It is to say that only a handful of the paintings on display are worth looking at for their own sakes. The general effect is of a tentative clumsiness only rivalled by our own dear Camden Towners. Even the fact that several distinct schools and movements are represented brings little relief: the turgid realism of the Ash-Can School and the park-railing impressionism of Maurice Prendergast give way to Max Weber's imitations of Cézanne, Matisse and Picasso, and Marsden Hartley's flaccid expressionism.

'Accuracy is the bane of art,' said Sadakichi Hartmann, one of the critics in Stieglitz's circle, and his fellow-critic Charles Caffin wanted painting to forsake 'the *appearances* of the world' and 'take on something of quality which is the essence of music – *the abstract*'. But it's the taking on of the ready-made appearances of other people's art without the accuracy of their underlying process which negates so many of these earnest efforts. The best are the least pretentious: the pleasant colour compositions of the Synchromists, elegant landscape watercolours by John Marin and Charles Demuth, Edward Hopper's stolid but erotically charged realism, Philip Evergood's semi-naïve figure-paintings, a gloomy but touching portrait of his parents by Raphael Soyer. Only Arthur G. Dove stands out as a true innovator. He had been to France like most of the others and learnt from the Impressionists, Cézanne and the Fauves, but while scraping a hard living as a farmer in Connecticut he began to paint the first ever American abstracts (four are in this show) at almost exactly the same time as Kandinsky was arriving at abstraction in Germany. Art-historically interesting as he is, however, Dove is not a painter who would shine in any more distinguished company than this.

Of the Chilean painter Roberto Matta, who joined the Surrealist Group in 1937, Breton wrote, 'it is probably Matta who is on the surest path to the attainment of the supreme secret: fire's dominion'. Matta himself is given to gnomic sayings, such as 'shake the eye before use and shake yourself with the shocked eye' and his recent paintings reflect on a vast scale (they are the size of cinemascope screens) the punning ebullience of his speech. They look like apocalyptic science fictions in which clutches of technological debris float against blue space or electronic firework-displays fizzle in streaks of white against lurid red and yellow lights. Nothing can be quite defined, not even the figures in a slightly smaller and more sombre painting called *Ne songe plus à fuir* from the early Fifties which might be a trial scene taking place in the middle of the aurora borealis; everything is, as it were, changing in front of your eyes. But for all their size and rhetoric, these are disappointing paintings, perhaps because, in spite of the studied vagueness of their details, their general impression is only too specific: the promised voyage into the inner and outer space of a brave new world takes one hardly further than into the banal cul-de-sac of a comic strip. This combination of 'I shall do such things . . .' with an ultimate failure of imagination and ensuing bathos is curiously reminiscent of that 19th-century apocalypst John Martin, the forerunner of Cecil B. de Mille. On a more modest scale – as can be seen from the selection of etchings at the Hayward and a complete suite of ten at the Redfern – Matta emerges as a quiet, sensitive colourist, master of water rather than fire.

If accuracy were really the bane of art it would be difficult to account for the success of Michael Leonard. Robert Melville, in his note to Leonard's catalogue, invokes the name of Zoffany and it is not impossible, to judge from the earliest painting in the show – a commissioned group of children round a dog – that Leonard should become the Zoffany of our time. But although his best paintings are based on cool, objective, almost photographic portraiture, the likeness of the sitters is less important than the use Leonard makes of them. Pinned momentarily in doorways and between geometrical areas of plain colour – muted brown, blue or grey – their faces form the centres of areas of disturbance which radiate out – via nervously active hands, a bursting parcel with tangling string, an uncomfortable cat escaping from a shoulder or the crowded juxtaposition of two figures encumbered with straps and travelling impedimenta – to fill the blank spaces with invisible waves of feeling. The situation – a recognisable individual who has just entered or is about to leave – is one which Zoffany used urbanely to animate some of his conversation pieces. In Leonard's hands it becomes an experience of direct tension between artist and sitter.

Films

John Coleman

Grey Days

Long Holidays of 1936 (AA) *Paris Pullman* and *Phoenix*
Communion (X) *London release*
My Nights with Susan, Sandra, Olga and Julie (X) *Filmcenta; Classics, Praed Street and Victoria*

Films from Spain that treat of the Civil War, a dreadful and fascinating three-year testing-ground for the bigger war to follow, a blot on our escutcheon and – in its outcome – a humiliating blight on the Spanish people which is only now, some 38 years on, getting a chance to be burnt out of the body politic; feature films about what happened in Spain between July 1936 and March 1939, when the republic officially surrendered and Burgos radio announced the hostilities were over, are desperately rare. Welcome, then, to Jaime Camino's *Long Holidays of 1936*, some sort of a resurrection of what season-to-season life might have been like for a Catalan family and their friends and kin, taking their vacations in villas in the hills above Barcelona when Franco sent in his Moorish troops, deciding to stay on until the temporary flare-up was over. Their sojourn proves to be protracted. One moves into the present tense because the talented Camino, himself born in 1936, has ransacked a store of domestic memories in preparing his screenplay with Manuel Gutierrez Aragon: his own mother, as a central character does in the film, fell heavily while carrying him, 19 July, the very day the villagers took to arms to defend themselves against the rebels. And the 'rebels' were, of course, not revolutionaries, good guys, but Falangist reactionaries. One foresees confusion ahead for those without benefit of Orwell *Homage to Catalonia*) and after.

Camino concentrates on his voluntarily beleaguered cross-section of middle-class escapists, and, oddly enough, the end of

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filming this complex, backwater fiction – they also serve an artist's purpose who only sit and wait – coincided with Franco's death. There were still censorship problems; it was still a brave film to be made by a Spaniard in Spain; a last long-held shot of Moorish riders slowly heaving towards the camera was chopped off, as were scenes showing the Republican flag and a banner proclaiming 'Down with the Fascist Killers'. All this to locate a cinematic work, against which a few British reviewers have already lodged facile objections for its failure to promote any sense of the urgent, larger context, in the surrounds of its creation. Camino gives us a grey, probable, small world, where most saved their skins at variable tolls of self-contempt, a very few broke out into heroism. The overriding technique is impressionistic and, if the effect is depressing, it is authentic at a level somewhere beneath the skin of set-ups, appearances. One would instance the ultra-right-wing couple, richies descending on a peace-at-all-price relative, whose smart car is bricked up behind a false wall in a garage: the sad, awful pair sit drunkenly, to the sound of *The Continental*, re-living a Noël Coward past behind the still wheel one night. A teacher (Francisco Rabal), imported to instruct the long-holidaying kids and adolescents privately, is reduced to begging them for food. Black-marketeering sets up; a proud biologist is slapped for not volunteering as a doctor; a sylvan early picnic is interrupted by children playing death-games. It may not be the encompassing epic some have blindly been waiting for out of Spain: it will do very well as a pensive commentary on what a lot of us would do under stress.

Alfred Sole's *Communion* is set by its youngish director in his home town, Paterson, New Jersey, around as weird a family and affiliates in the Italian-American sector as a Corman or De Palma (*not* to say a Hitchcock) could conjure up. Silly, but with visual flair and a plot-twist of merit. *My Nights with Susan, Sandra, Olga and Julie* is the kind of dumb 'sex'-nonsense it takes the Dutch to make. If the cap fits, wear it. Incredibly, our own Elisabeth Lutyens scored – or did she?

The Grosvenor Estate

In our issue of 7 October we published an article by Raymond Eisenstark reviewing the exhibition, *The Grosvenor Story*. In this article Mr Eisenstark stated that the Grosvenor Estate is constantly at loggerheads with Westminster City Council because it encourages commercial tenants rather than residential ones to avoid the effects of leasehold reform. He also referred to a Pimlico tenant who had been precipitated into signing a lease only to find that she herself rather than the Estate was next day served with a Repairs Notice.

Mr Eisenstark accepts that the trustees of the Grosvenor Estate do not seek to avoid their obligation under the Leasehold Reform Act in the manner he has suggested and further that the Pimlico tenant knew that a Dangerous Structure Notice (not a Repairs Notice) was to be served in relation to the premises in respect of which she wished to take a lease from the trustees.

We apologise to the trustees of the Grosvenor Estate for stating that the Estate was seeking to avoid the provisions of the leasehold reform act and that the Estate was acting harshly towards a tenant in Pimlico.

Television

Ian Hamilton

Record Bids

Is your child Immature, Untidy, Sycophantic, Tolerant and Trustworthy; does he or she exhibit an air of 'trance-like preoccupation', or would you rather put your money on the nipper having 'dirty sexual habits'? The thing is that any one of these or similar cameo descriptions of your children's budding personalities may already have been entered in a dossier which, according to this week's disconcerting *Open Door* (BBC-2), more and more schools are keeping locked away until someone important – another schoolmaster or, better still, the police – wants to take a look at them. The one authority group not allowed to take a peek is, unsurprisingly, the parents: it would never do to have *them* challenging some spicy verdict on young Johnny's masturbation habits or complaining that *they've* never seen him in a trance. Amateurishly put together though it was, and too over-assertive for the good of its own case, this was a worthwhile protest-show. I think we all know at least one teacher who ought to have been fired long ago: imagine his judgment of your child being mulled over by some magistrate ten years from now.

Another show that is rather lumbering in its procedures but frequently effective in its judgments is *The London Programme* (LWT), which made a welcome return last Sunday night. The gloomy topic was the plight of London's dozen soccer teams, but a number of sound points were made about the utterly crazy economics of the game in general. An excellently plump and jovial accountant was wheeled in to underscore each lowering proposition: 'If you amalgamated the balance sheets of all 92 league clubs it would be *horrific*,' he exclaimed, with reverential glee, but no one (not even mighty intellects like Brian Glanville and Gordon Jago) quite managed to explain why, all this being so, we still have 92 league clubs. Somehow, we just do. As might have been expected, envious eyes were turned to the US and we saw shots of a multi-coloured Rodney Marsh racing towards goal with a fruitily hysterical commentator bellowing him on. Can the players hear the commentary? One supposes so, but think of that over here; strikers felled in the area by clichés from behind, defenders frozen in mid-air by a syntactical breakdown.

One felt the horror of this all the more keenly during last Saturday's *Match of the Day* (BBC-1), when instead of their usual feast of goalless draws the show suddenly got lucky by happening to be at White Hart Lane for Spurs' merciless thrashing of the upstart Bristol Rovers. But it wasn't really Spurs' victory as far as John Motson was concerned; all he could think of as the goals mounted was whether or not the *Match of the Day* record was going to be broken; at least a minor coronary seemed on the cards as his strangulated shrieks reached falsetto territories hitherto uncharted. When number nine went in I'm sure I heard something drop.

It was difficult, if not impossible, to know how to respond to Barbara Stonehouse's agonised contribution to *The Light of Experience* (BBC-2). Both loyal and vengeful, steadfast and self-pitying, she couldn't – understandably enough – strike any consistent line on what had happened to her, except that it was awful and that people on the whole have been rather wonderful about it. Extracts from consoling letters were read out, and we were shown many harrowing before-and-after snaps of John. Mainly, though, it was Mrs Stonehouse straight to camera and after a bit it was very hard to look her in the eye. Stonehouse no doubt has the same problem.

Ballet

Oleg Kerensky

Safe?

The Sleeping Beauty *Covent Garden*

It was *Beauty* which first established the Royal Ballet as the western world's leading classical company, at Covent Garden in 1939 and 1946, and at the Metropolitan, New York, in 1949. After years of that old 'authentic' Sergueyev production, with what came to seem almost equally authentic Messel sets, the company made two attempts to give the ballet a new look. The

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first was beautiful, in its own way, but was never accepted by most people as 'right'; choreographically it was notable mainly for an interpolated pas de deux by Ashton depicting the love of Aurora and her Prince immediately after her awakening. The second was visually depressing and choreographically a mess, and was speedily abandoned. Now the company has played safe, with Ninette de Valois in charge of a production that mainly goes back to Sergueyev but incorporates the awakening pas de deux, and with sets and costumes by David Walker which are elegant and appropriate without being distinctive.

Safe? That perceptive critic Alexander Bland has suggested that attempting to revive a success which has been dead for ten years is in fact a risky, almost impossible, task. Styles and tastes have changed too much, and we have seen some successful new looks at the ballet, especially Nureyev's for Festival Ballet. Voices have been heard condemning the new *Beauty* as boring; one friend scathingly described it as something out of the Royal Academy.

But in a sense that is what it is – a great 19th-century masterpiece. It is right that the Royal Ballet, which had the good fortune to acquire the original version from Russia, should preserve and present it as lovingly and truthfully as possible. This production once again gives Covent Garden audiences the chance to see the real thing, and the dancers to meet the challenge of real Petipa. There are minor flaws, easily rectifiable. A few of the costumes are overfussy; and instead of seeing the Prince travelling to the Palace, we get a feeble boat ride followed by an orchestral interlude and by the Lilac Fairy bourréeing endlessly among the sleeping bodies.

Some people object to the awakening pas de deux, in Ashton's most glorious lyrical style, as being in conflict with Petipa. But all the Petipa ballets now contain a wide variety of styles; to some extent they always did. What is needed is a brief 'bridge' between the awakening and the pas de deux; Aurora should greet her parents and friends and ideally there should be a scenic change, as there was in 1968, to mark the transition from realism to fantasy. It is arguable that the coda of the final pas de deux should be restored, instead of the very popular Three Ivans, though the new idea of giving Aurora and the Prince some rapid virtuoso passages in the finale is an effective and exciting substitute.

This *Beauty* concentrates on dancing rather than on narrative or drama. In doing so, it is in keeping with the Maryinsky-Kirov tradition; so only the very best in the way of dancing will do. At present the company has several very good Auroras, but not quite a great one. Fonteyn used to be an innocent teenager at the beginning, a grand ballerina at the end. Lesley Collier and Ann Jenner manage the first, Merle Park the second. Collier will probably blossom into an ideal Aurora in no time at all; Park dances the role with a dazzling confidence that could hardly be surpassed. The Prince in this version is not much of a role, though David Wall and Stephen Jefferies fill it out with sheer personality. Wall is perhaps the best all-round dancer-actor, while for virtuosity and the most relaxed manner, Dowell is the winner. Wayne Eagling is much better suited to this Prince than to the one in *Swan Lake*, and almost persuaded me that he might yet be a *danseur noble*.

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Result of No 2484 Set by Tim Hopkins

We asked you to invent slogans and adages which might become popular in time to be included in the second edition of Eric Partridge's *Dictionary of Catch Phrases*.

Report by PC 49

You, the ordinary members of the public, would, I feel sure, like the bad news first, which is that most of your entries were something rotten. Just because Russ 'the Professor' Davies reckons he didn't know what a catch phrase was (NS 9 Sept), that doesn't let you lot off the hook. Ignorance, as the legal johnnies are prone to put it, is no excuse. Grubby one-liners from you, Mr Sidesaddle, we can do without; and even with some of the winners, we felt we were being a bit lenient re your idea of catchability.

Now – and I think this calls for a fresh para – for the good news. By dint of a little you-know-what and how's-your-father, we have arranged a special on-top-of-everything prize for the next six weeks, through the generous offices of Messrs Routledge and Kegan Paul. Each week one of you lucky blighters will get a copy of Partridge's *Dictionary of Catch Phrases* – currently retailing at something approaching the eight quid mark – on top of the regular green sheets. So put your backs into it, all right? The first winner is Mr Ransome; oh, and a pound an entry. By the way, we are eager to hear from other prospective sponsors, especially, not to put too fine a point on it, Johnny Walker, Players No 6, Wembley Stadium, Norah's Sauna, and the Royal Mint.

It's in the mailbag: converse of *It's in the bag*, a warning that some projected undertaking is likely to be difficult, expensive, delayed, hazardous or perhaps simply impossible.

Weeks rather than months: wry or impatient dashing of unrealistic hopes, extravagant demands, etc. Cf. *Don't you know there's a war on?*

I've sold it to Reggie: implies that the speaker has conducted a transaction which materially benefits the other party on the implicit promise of future unspecified rewards.

Safe as an Irish jubilee: heavily protected; invulnerable; lacking spontaneous excitement.
BASIL RANSOME

Doing a George Baker: going away for a dirty weekend. (Sir George Baker was the President of the High Court Family Division who advocated instant divorce in 1977. By 1980 the duration of the average marriage in the UK was a few days, hence the c.p.)

Jay's fluid: clever P.R.; applied esp. to one who is facile, quick, with astringent manner yet calming phraseology; high class 'flannel'.

Wearing my Jack Jones: going through a phase of self-imposed austerity; being ostentatiously monkish. (Jack Jones was a prominent Trade Union leader famous for his puritanism. A *Jack Jones* came to mean both a cloth cap and a hair shirt.)
T. GRIFFITHS

Turn a thing insight-out: to launch a prolonged probe into some matter which reveals nothing of interest at great length.

As nutty as a lordell: as mad or impracticable as possible. (Originally *As nutty as Lord L*, referring to the familiar abbreviation for an eccentric peer, apparently notorious during his lifetime, now forgotten.) E. O. PARROTT

Wiping the slater clean: an impossibly difficult task; cf. *cleaning the Augean Stables.*

All clean-up and whitehouse fashion: no 'bristols'.

It works like a leyland: it doesn't work at all; or, more colloq., it came to pieces in my hand.
MAUD GRACECHURCH

As rich as a street Arab: as rich as Croesus; as rich as an Arab owning Oxford Street, Regent Street, etc.

To benn the cabinet: to frustrate action by incessant talk.

To do a Harold: to give an honour which is worth nothing, or which works in a negative fashion. M. K. CHEESEMAN

To give Banaban compo: to offer a derisory piece of compensation (usu. applied to government bodies); to perpetrate a gross and insulting act of injustice.
JEAN PASTOR

People called Stonehouse shouldn't throw clothes: meaning obscure. Perhaps moralistic advice to corrupt MPs. Prob. connected with phrase of same vintage, *to make a quick Buckley* (q.v.). J. Y. WATSON

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Tony Miles

Chess

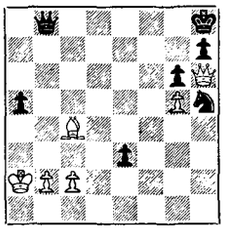
No 56 **The Tilburg Interpolis**

The recent Interpolis tournament, held at Tilburg in the Netherlands, in one respect at least made chess history. It was the first category 14 event (i.e. the average rating of the participants exceeded 2575) since the adoption of the current tournament classification system – in comparison the last two interzonal tournaments were only category 12.

The strength of the event is illustrated by the fact that the ex-world champion Smyslov could only finish 10th and failed to win a single game. My performance was reasonable, but I have some cause for disappointment. My customary lethargic start included an extremely amateurish loss to Karpov (see below) but four successive wins brought me into the lead. I started the last round half a point behind Karpov, needing to win to catch him, but never at my best at unearthly hours of the morning, I presented Andersson with his only win and had to settle for second place.

White: A. Karpov **Black: A. J. Miles**

1. P-QB4, P-QB4; 2. N-KB3, N-KB3; 3. N-B3, N-B3. Even this move was a slip of the wrist. I intended to play a line with 3. . . . P-Q4 but thought I could just as well play it next move. **4. P-Q4, P x P; 5. N x P, P-K3; 6. P-KN3, Q-N3; 7. N-N3, N-K4; 8. P-K4, B-N5; 9. Q-K2.** So far, all well-known theory. Now I tried a line which has been played several times in this country (notably a game Miles-Nunn) with which I suspected Karpov would not be familiar. **9. . . . P-QR4; 10. B-K3, Q-B3; 11. P-B3, 0-0; 12. N-Q4, Q-R3; 13. N-N5, P-Q4.** Still following my game against Nunn, when (as white!), since the game was being played at a relatively fast time limit, my first reaction was to trust the rook sacrifice and look for a good alternative to 14. N-B7. Thinking I had found one (14. BP x P, P x P; 15. B-Q4) I played it, overlooking 15. . . . P x P!; 16. B x N, P x P with a terrific attack. Consequently I never did examine 14. N-B7. Had I done so, just for five minutes, I would not have gone anywhere near the line. As it was I vaguely recalled Nunn implying the correctness of the sacrifice in his notes to the game, but I had not bothered to look at his analysis. Unfortunately, as I found out to my cost, it is absolute nonsense. **14. N-B7.** Of course! Only now did I seriously start to analyse. It came as a great shock to realise that I was already lost. **14. . . . Q-Q3.** Nunn, I now discover, gives this a '?', recommending instead **14. . . . Q-B3; 15. N x R, N x BP** when he only considers **16. R-B1.** Unfortunately white has numerous other moves, the simplest being **16. B-Q4** (threatening P-K5) and if **16. . . . P-K4; 17. P x P** followed by Q x N. Black has no semblance of compensation for the rook. **15. N x R, P x KP.** Alternatively 15. . . . P-Q5; 16. 0-0-0! B x N; 17. P x B, Q-R6ch; 18. Q-N2, Q x Qch; 19. K x Q, P x B; 20. B-K2 is hopeless. **16. P x P, N x KP; 17. R-Q1!** Simple and decisive. If now 17. . . . N x N; 18. P x N, B x Pch; 19. K-B2 wins. Black's position is resignable, but I have something against losing in 17 moves so . . . **17. . . . Q-B3; 18. B-N2, N x BP; 19. B-Q4, B x Nch; 20. P x B, P-B4; 21. 0-0, N(B5)-Q3; 22. N-N6, P-K4; 23. N x B, R x N; 24. B x P, Q-B4ch; 25. B-Q4 Resigns.**



Problem 56

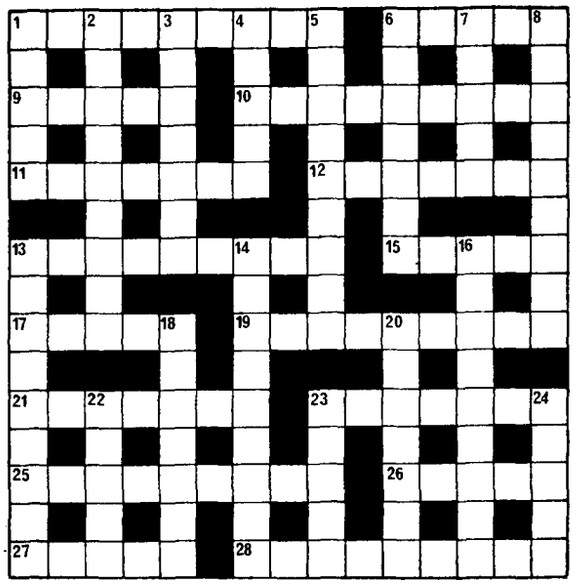
Black to play. How should the game go? Answers to me at the NS postmarked not later than 9 November.

Solution to Problem 54

1. N-B6ch! P x N (or N x N; 2. R-Q8 mate); 2. Q x Qch, P x Q; 3. B-R5 mate.

Weekend Crossword 1239

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1239, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 8 November.



ACROSS

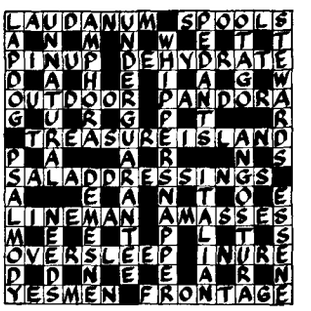
1. Serious scrap between devil and insect (9).
6. Shoots back in line across (5).
9. 'With eager thought warbling his —— lay' (Milton) (5).
10. This device could give one rare spoil (9).
11. Used in play or screen adaptation if curtailed (7).
12. Strike from laziness, but not taking it easy (7).
13. Pain which makes a bather run wild (9).
15. Man's ecclesiastical companion (5).
17. Projection of composition in reverse (5).
19. Nothing obscene goes back to school in these houses (9).
21. Coo, Bert, we're in time! (7).
23. Something showy starts games with children (7).
25. Unpack a basket to where the race starts (9).
26. Snake among the French you returned in a vessel (5).
27. Had a nose for fish (5).
28. Gloomy when journalists go into action (9).

DOWN

1. River which needs to try to make work (5).
2. China in place or out of order (9).
3. The first person in Germany is held by others to be the wealthiest (7).
4. Try to get a place in a cheap Plymouth hotel (5).
5. Indulgence to an untidy cleaner (9).
6. Punishment as a sign of rank (7).
7. Cut down a bob in what is reverse of expensive (5).
8. Distant writing about a measure needed for country places (9).
13. You enter tubes — they are stuffy places! (9).
14. Milkless play for a bowler (9).
16. Presents given for party races (9).
18. Small number consecrated as most virtuous (7).
20. You in Italy certain to discover idleness (7).
22. 'War is the —— of kings' (Dryden) (5).
23. Dress unsuitable for wearing in bed? (5).
24. Estimated distribution of 22 (5).

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1237



Prizewinners to No 1237

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Vol. 94 No. 2432

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Meetings

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON, Gower St, WC1E 6BT. Lunch Hour Lectures, 1.20 to 2. Admission free. 1 Nov. 'Sixty years Russian Revolution — achievements and failures' by Professor C. Abramsky; 3 Nov. 'Faces of Royalty: The Artist's Impression' — II. Two BBC Enterprises films with commentary by Dr Roy Strong: 'Charles I — The Making of a Martyr' and 'Charles II —'

THEODORE HERZL SOCIETY, The Hon. Terence Prittie, 'Prospects of Peace for Israel', Tues. 1 Nov. 8.15 p.m. Hannah Karminski House, Lower Ground Floor Hall, 9 Adamson Road, NW3.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON: The 1977 Stamp Memorial Lecture entitled: 'A New Industrial Policy' will be given by Peter Parker, MVO, MA (Chairman, British Railways Board) at 5.30 p.m. on Monday, 31 October 1977 in the Beveridge Hall at The University of London, Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1. Admission free, without ticket. Academic Registrar.

The New Image of Monarchy'.

THE TATE GALLERY. An evening with Tom Phillips. The artist presents two new works on film and slides from 6.30 to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, 1 Nov. Tickets & further details free on application to: The Secretary, Tate Gallery, Millbank, London SW1P 4RG. Tel. 828 1212 ext. 202.

A SOCIALIST PHILOSOPHY for the 80s. Fabian Society Autumn Lectures. Peter Townsend (3 Nov.); David Owen (8 Nov.). The first lecture at Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton St, SW1. The second lecture at Central Hall, Westminster, SW1. Both at 7.30 p.m. Tickets 60p each from Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth St, SW1. 930 3077.

SUNDAY 30 OCTOBER. 'Jewish students on British university campuses'. Moshe Foreman, Chairman of Union of Jewish Students, will speak on this theme. 37 Broadhurst Gardens, NW6. 8 p.m. Members 20p. Non-members 50p. Organised by Young Mapam.

CYPRUS: Peace in a Divided Land. Jenny and Stephen Harrow recently returned from Cyprus will speak to Westminster UNA with slides. Tuesday 1 November 7.15 p.m. St. Barnabas Church Hall, Ranelagh Grove (off Pimlico Road SW1). Brigadier Harbottle OBE in chair. All welcome.

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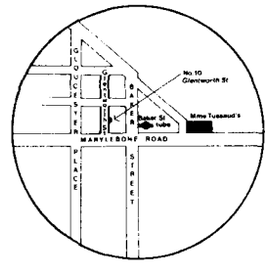

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